

THE STRUCTURE OF MARX'S WORLD-VIEW

by

John M. McMurtry



## ABSTRACT

### Book 1

The Introduction identifies a representative host of objections that have been brought against Marx's theory of historical materialism, and organizes these objections into a definite, complex problematic. The rest of Book 1 provides the solution to this problematic while, more broadly, systematically disclosing a precise and integrated theoretical framework underlying Marx's labyrinthine work.

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(This framework is developed in eight chapters: the first six of which explain its central categories in the "ascending" order that follows, and the last two of which explain the central relationships (called "economic determinism" and "technological determinism") held by Marx to obtain among the referents of these categories.)

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Chapter I ascertains and delineates Marx's hitherto undisclosed theory of human nature implicit in his post-1845 work. This disinterred theory yields what has often been held as the crucial "missing factor" in the mature Marx's thought, and at the same time defines a new foundation to the structure of his world-view.

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Chapter II then explicates Marx's concept of the historical materialist actualization of this human nature, and the chief causal

factor in his theory, the forces of production: in such manner that Marx's notion of the latter is rendered clear and schematic, and shown free of sundry claimed flaws.

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In Chapter III, the most enigmatic and important category in Marx's entire corpus -- the relations of production/Economic Structure, which he holds to be the "essence" of any and all historical society -- is made lucid by an original characterization induced from Marx's work. Resolution to a matrix of attendant problems to do with his concepts of "alienation", "class", "laws of motion" and so on follows.

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Chapter IV concerns itself with the precise nature of Marx's idea of the legal and political superstructure: particularly its distinction from the Economic Structure and the grounds for holding it superstructural, both of which critics have judged impossible to secure.

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Chapter V argues from Marx's texts for a new and more rigorous concept of ideology: which it is shown enables refutation of the most influential criticisms which have been brought against Marx's theory in this connection.

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Chapter VI introduces to Marx's general theoretical framework a previously undiscerned distinct category, forms of social consciousness and delineates it.

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Chapter VII works out a novel explanation of the pivotal Marxian doctrine of "economic determinism" which renders the latter immune to the standard objections issued against it. And Chapter VIII provides the first systematic account of the principles of

"correspondence" claimed by Marx to hold between forces and relations of production (the theoretical essence of his "technological determinism"): from which principles the primacy of the forces of production is explained and the basic laws of historical materialism are developed.

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## Book 2

Having secured the precise structure of Marx's world-view in Book 1, the enterprise in Book 2 is to achieve its Aufhebung: with respect to the focus of Marx's own concern, domination and liberation. Marx's general principles of domination and liberation are ascertained, and then shown to be multiply inadequate both in the consistent range of their application to spheres of sociohistorical intercourse, and as such. Growing out of this analysis emerges a new and higher order theory of domination and liberation, which introduces such basic concepts as "adult/youth structure of domination", "psychological means of life", "forces of destruction", "term ownership" and, most importantly, "formal domination" in its sublating metamorphosis of the Marxian paradigm.



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## KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

- YM: Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society, ed. L.D. Easton and K.H. Guddat: Doubleday, New York, 1967.
- EPM: Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, Karl Marx: Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1961.
- GID: The German Ideology, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964.
- RZ: Articles from the Neue Rheinische Zeitung, Marx and Engels: Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972.
- P of P: The Poverty of Philosophy, Karl Marx: Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1966.
- WL & C: Wage Labour and Capital, Karl Marx: Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow.
- CM: Manifesto of the Communist Party, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1959.
- CPE: A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, Karl Marx: Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970.
- Pre-C: Karl Marx/Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations, trans. Jack Cohen, ed. E.J. Hobsbawm: Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1964.
- 18thB: The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, Karl Marx: Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1967.
- G: Karl Marx/Grundrisse, trans. M. Nicolaus: Penguin Books, Baltimore, 1973.
- CI: Capital (Volume I), Karl Marx: Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965.
- CII: Capital (Volume II), Karl Marx: Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1967.
- CIII: Capital (Volume III), Karl Marx: Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1954.

- S-VI:     Theories of Surplus-Value (Part I), Karl Marx: Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1954.
- S-VIII:   Theories of Surplus-Value (Part III), Karl Marx: Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1971.
- CW:       The Civil War in France, Karl Marx: Martin Lawrence Ltd., London, 1933.
- GP:       Critique of the Gotha Program, Karl Marx: Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1966.
- OB:       On Britain, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1962.
- SC:       Selected Correspondence, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1953.
- Bott:     Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy, ed. T.B. Bottomore and M. Rubel: Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1961.
- Note:       Unless otherwise stated, italics within excerpts from the above volumes are my own.

## BOOK 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1

Karl Marx's philosophy of human history is perhaps as celebrated for the charges made against it as for the claims it advances. Four generations of Western economists, philosophers, historians, sociologists and political scientists -- to name but a few -- have questioned, criticized or vilified its formulations. But perhaps the most persistent formal reproof issued against it -- a reproof which must specially interest the student of philosophy -- is that it is conceptually confused. Marx, it is held, articulated his doctrine ambiguously and loosely, if not incoherently. Thus the well-known commentator, H.B. Acton, concludes his book The Illusion of the Epoch with the somewhat ungenerous decision that Marx's theory is, simply, "a philosophical farrago".<sup>1</sup> In much the same vein, Professor Sidney Hook, who now challenges Marx's doctrine as ardently as he once defended it, advises that: "Rigorous examination is one thing Marx's ideas will not stand because they were not rigorously formulated".<sup>2</sup> Even the very sympathetic C. Wright Mills laments that Marx's theory is "full of genuine murk" and "contains much that

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<sup>1</sup>H.B. Acton, The Illusion of the Epoch (London, 1955) p. 271.

<sup>2</sup>Sidney Hook, Marx and the Marxists (N.Y., 1955) p. 35.



is ... ambiguous or inadequate".<sup>3</sup>

The above writers are by no means the only scholars who censure Marx for fuzziness and muddle. The explicit charge of "ambiguity", for example, is laid against Marx's conceptual scaffolding by such various figures as Raymond Aron in his Eighteen Lectures on Industrial Society<sup>4</sup>, Bertram D. Wolfe in his One Hundred Years in the Life of a Doctrine<sup>5</sup>, Peter Sorokin in his Contemporary Sociological Theories<sup>6</sup>, and any number of other academic commentators. Economist M.M. Bober utters much the same objection when he holds that Marx's work is "obscure, careless in expression and contradictory"<sup>7</sup>; while the historian Karl Federn voices his criticism more forcefully still: "the vagueness and indistinctness of Marxian terminology", he remarks, is "deplorable"<sup>8</sup>. In short, there exists a very broadly established opinion that Marx's theoretical framework ruinously wants

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<sup>3</sup>C. Wright Mills, The Marxists (N.Y., 1962) p. 102 and 136 respectively.

<sup>4</sup>Raymond Aron, Eighteen Lectures on Industrial Society (trans. T.B. Bottomore (London, 1967) p. 48.

<sup>5</sup>Bertram D. Wolfe, One Hundred Years in the Life of a Doctrine (London, 1967) p. XXIII.

<sup>6</sup>~~Peter~~<sup>itrim</sup> Sorokin, Contemporary Sociological Theories (N.Y., 1928) p. 39.

<sup>7</sup>M.M. Bober, Karl Marx's Interpretation of History (Cambridge, 1950) p. 297.

<sup>8</sup>Karl Federn, The Materialist Conception of History (London, 1939) p. 61.

in clarity and precision.

This opinion seems at least partially justified by the enormous number and variety of interpretations of Marx's work. Perhaps no corpus since the Holy Scriptures has been so kaleidoscopically construed. Thus, though a large proportion of social and political thought since Marx has taken a stance on, or from, his "historical materialist" theory, most of it seems in important disagreement with the rest on what in fact the theory involves. This hermeneutically volatile situation has led to a proliferation of specific disputes.

There are very substantial differences of opinion, for example, on what Marx's position actually is on ontology (is he really a philosophical materialist?) epistemology (is he a naive realist, pioneering pragmatist or what?), ethics (what is its place, if any, in his system?), methodology (positive or normative?), the dialectic (metaphysical or heuristic?), political theory (anarchist or totalitarian?), and so on. Then (perhaps giving rise to many of the general disagreements alluded to above) the focal categories of his historical materialist theory -- "forces of production", "relations of production", "superstructure" etc. -- are themselves subject to widely various interpretations (as we shall presently show). The student of Marxian thought cannot help but be bemused by the situation in which he thus finds himself. On the one hand, the texts with which he is concerned are said to be full of conceptual muddle while, on the other, the interpretators are in systematic disagreement about what the muddles are. In approaching Marx's theory, hence, one might be

excused for feeling somewhat like a worker at the building of Babel. A confusion of tongues seems everywhere.

To a philosopher, such uncertainty of sense is of course particularly galling. It is for this reason perhaps that Marx's work has been rejected by many philosophers as unworthy of serious attention. When one hundred years of examination and argument have failed to ascertain what its central categories mean or what its stance on the most basic philosophical issues is, it may well be because the corpus in question is too ill-conceived to sort out. On the other hand, Marx's work has been subject to such persistent manipulation by both its antagonists and defendants<sup>9</sup> that it is possible its confusion exists more in the minds of its interpreters than itself.

But whatever the grounds of the problem in question, Marx's work invites an effort to distill from its rich and powerful sweep a clear and cogent framework which is both unconfusing and faithful to Marx's writings. This shall be my enterprise in Book I of this essay. What will emerge from this exposition will be (in attempt at least) the conceptual substance of Marx's system, stripped to its most skeletal form and organized into the cohesive structure which

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<sup>9</sup>Examples of manipulation of Marx's work would be the effort of Western commentators to make Marx's theory out to be anti-democratic and the complementary effort of Soviet commentators to make it out to be a legitimation of Communist Party rule. Interestingly, such distortion seems to aptly exemplify one of Marx's central principles -- that a society's ideology is always determined by the interests of its ruling class.

his works directly and indirectly imply. What Marx once called his "guiding thread" (CPE, Preface) -- and what I have called "the structure of his world-view" -- will thus be delineated, if my essay succeeds, in a simplicity and clarity of form which avoids some if not all of the conventional basic objections to, and distortions of, the sense of his overall theory. In short, I am out to ascertain and clarify the general and underlying Logos of Karl Marx's vision, which has for one reason or another been so evasive to so many in the past.

When I have completed this endeavour -- which I shall pursue as economically and decisively as possible, at the risk of boldness -- I shall consider the adequacy of this general framework with respect to Marx's own greatest concern, namely domination and liberation. This critical section, <sup>Book 2</sup> ~~Part B~~, will persist in the modus vivendi of my entire essay -- which is the quest for general and connecting principles and world-view shape, whether expositionally or critically construed.

Before the German Ideology (1845-6), it is widely and correctly held that Marx's general theoretical framework was still in a pell-mell, formative stage. The now famous Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts -- written in 1844-5 when Marx was 26 years old -- is the most instructive case in point. Though these writings offer the reader a fascinating insight into Marx's developing thought and some of the



most poetic and suggestive remarks in his entire corpus, they are in the end just manuscripts and are full of all the loose ends and conceptual vagary one might expect of such a form. Even with The German Ideology and -- within the next three years -- The Poverty of Philosophy and The Communist Manifesto, the reader is still confronted with a somewhat unfinished theory: still primarily concerned with refuting others, still in composition collaboration with Frederick Engels, still in the stage of sweeping new principles not yet firmly set.

I think it is generally recognized that the Preface to A Contribution to Political Economy -- published in 1859 -- gives us the framework of Marx's overview in the most compressed and lucid form it ever assumes in his work. At this point, Marx's theory could be said to have attained a thoroughgoing maturity. It is worth citing more or less in full:

The general conclusion at which I arrived and which, once reached, continued to serve as the guiding thread in my studies, may be formulated briefly as follows: In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society -- the real foundation, on which "legal and political superstructures arise" and to which definite forms of social consciousness correspond. The mode of production of material life determines the social, political, and spiritual processes of life in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or -- what is but a legal expression for them -- with the property relations within which they had been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of

production these relations turn into their fetters. Then occurs a period of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations, the distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production which can be established with the precision of a natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophical -- in short, ideological -- forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; rather, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social forces of production and the relations of production. No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have been developed and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society. Therefore, mankind always sets itself only such problems as it can solve; since, on closer examination, it will always be found that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions necessary for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation.<sup>10</sup>

The general theoretical framework or "world-view structure" which emerges from this passage is, I propose, constituted of the

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<sup>10a</sup>) This translation, with minor alterations (e.g. I have changed Bottomore's improper translation "the general character of the social political and ideological processes of life" in the fourth sentence) is from Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy, ed., T.B. Bottomore and Maximilien Rubel (Penguin: 1967), p. 67.

b) It will be observed that I have deleted Marx's few sentences on the Asiatic, ancient, feudal and bourgeois modes of production. I have done so for two reasons, the second encouraging the first: i) the remarks in question are not relevant to my stated enterprise, ii) the notion of history falling into four progressive stages of production -- what Popper mistakenly thinks is the postulation of an "inalterable, predetermined path" of history (Poverty of Historicism (London: 1955), p. 50) -- is one Marx only tentatively suggests here and, as he explicitly insists elsewhere, does not involve the postulation of a "general path every people is fated to tread". (S.C. 379)



following fundamental categories:

- 1) forces or powers of production (Produktivkräfte)
- 2) relations of production (Produktionverhältnisse) or, speaking holistically, Economic Structure (Ökonomische Struktur)
- 3) legal and political superstructure (juristischer und politischer Überbau)
- 4) ideology (ideologische formen)
- 5) forms of social consciousness (gesellschaftliche Bewusstseinsformen)

Before proceeding further, it is important to note that:

a) I have placed, in line with Marx's usage, relations of production and "Economic Structure" in the same category: though, strictly speaking and unremarked by Marx, they are logically distinct. (Marx says: "The totality of these relations constitutes the economic structure" (my emphases)). I will henceforth refer to these terms in the unitary form "relations of production/Economic Structure."

b) I have distinguished "ideological forms" or "ideology" from forms of social consciousness": a distinction that is not conventionally made by commentators on Marx: though Marx himself makes it and though it is, I think, of important significance (see Section VI)

Marx also draws attention in the above passage to several crucial relationships (relationships which he discusses and elaborates in one way or another throughout his work) which obtain among

the five identified classes of phenomena:

- i) the relations of production/Economic Structure correspond (entsprechen) to a definite stage of development of the forces of production: except in pre-revolutionary periods when they "fetter" these forces.
- ii) the forms of social consciousness correspond (entsprechen) with the relations of production/Economic Structure: as do (as Marx says elsewhere and suggests here) the legal and political superstructure and ideology.
- iii) the "mode of production" (that is, for Marx, the forces and relations of production together) determines the social, political and spiritual processes of life (presumably, the legal and political superstructure, ideology and forms of social consciousness).

For the purposes of economy and simplicity, I will reduce without loss these three relationships to two:

1 Relationship (i) plus that aspect of relationship (ii) which applies to productive forces alone shall together count as one complex relationship between productive forces and the rest of the categories of phenomena identified in Marx's overall framework: which complex relationship I shall subsume under the name Technological Determinism (See Chapter VII).

2 Relationship (ii) which with respect to the influence of relations of production/Economic Structure seems merely repeated in (iii), shall count as the second major complex relationship in

Marx's general theoretical framework: that is, the relationship between relations of production/Economic Structure and the rest of the general categories of phenomena indicated above. This second, equally important relationship I shall call Economic Determinism (See Chapter VIII).

Now the resolution of the socio-historical process into the above five factors and the two fundamental relationships held to obtain between these factors constitutes the essential substance of Marx's historical materialist theory or, in my terms, the "structure of Marx's world-view". However, precisely what Marx means by each of his seminal categories and exactly how he construes the two basic relationships are matters which have aroused a century of unresolved questioning and controversy. In keeping with the overall criticism we have already noted of Marx's putative muddle and confusion, every one of these central categories has been attacked by commentators as ill-conceived while the basic relationships held to exist between their referents have been more vigorously criticized still. Very briefly stated, the more telling objections which have been urged against Marx in these connections are:

- 1 The notion of "forces of production" is confused. To begin with, they seem to be inseparable from the relations of production. For example, if we consider a force of production like a fishing vessel, we can see that it not only involves a complex of technical instruments and skills but very definite relations as well among the

people required to run it -- among that is, helmsman, cabin-boy, crew, captain and so forth. Apart from such organizational relationships, the fishing boat is not really a productive force at all, but a chaotic collection of tools and skills. But if forces of production must in this way involve relations of production, then Marx's idea of the former as a separate factor in the social process is obviously untenable.<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, there seems to exist almost as great a difficulty in prying apart the productive forces from the institutional and ideological superstructure as there is in distinguishing them from the production relations. For since the productive forces require laws to safeguard their operation and since they require ideas by virtue of their very existence as agencies of purposive fabrication, they would seem thereby ultimately inseparable from the laws and ideology of the superstructure<sup>12</sup> (see (3) and (4)). In sum, Marx's "forces of production" category collapses in the end into intolerable conceptual amorphousness.

2 What the term "relations of production" means is more problematic still. It could mean technological relations of the type indicated in (1), ownership relations (as is suggested in the Preface by Marx's remark that "property relations" are but a "legal

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<sup>11</sup>This is a paraphrase of H.B. Acton's argument in The Illusion of the Epoch, p. 159 ff.

<sup>12</sup>See ibid., p. 164-7, for an example of this form of criticism.



expression for" production relations), market place relations, several of these at the same time or nothing clear at all.<sup>13</sup>

If it means the first, the problem outlined in (1) arises. If it means the second, the distinction between the "essential" production relations and legal superstructure falls to the ground. There is no textual evidence to indicate that it means the third and if it means several relations at the same time or is just obscure, then Marx is guilty of having either confused or bluffed us. In short, the most crucial category of Marx's theory -- the relations of production -- is a cipher. As Acton puts it, Marx leaves us here in "the devil of confusion".

3 What is meant by the "legal and political superstructure" is also unclear. On the one hand such a superstructure overlaps with the relations of production in the manner described in (2) -- that is, the property relations prescribed by the superstructure seem indistinguishable from the production relations constituting the economic base.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, the institutional superstructure penetrates so deeply into the operation of the productive

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<sup>13</sup>John Plamenatz (Man and Society (London: 1968) III, p. 280 ff) argues that Marx's production relations must be equivalent to property relations; H.B. Acton that they also include market place relations, Irving Zeitlin (Marxism: A re-examination (Princeton: 1967), p. 64) that they involve both work and property relations and Patrick Gardiner (Theories of History (Glencone Illinois: 1960), p. 132) that they are simply "not clear".

<sup>14</sup>Plamenatz develops this point most successfully in Man and Society, p. 280 ff.

forces -- every production process is subject to some rules and laws of a non-technological sort -- that it is difficult to conceive how the two are properly separable.<sup>15</sup> Inasmuch then as the legal-political superstructure is involved in some way in both the productive forces and relations, Marx's view of it as a distinct social factor is difficult to make sense of.

4 The notion of "ideology" or "ideological forms" is no less muddled. It could mean all ideas, just unscientific and/or false ideas, those ideas which favour the ruling class or both these latter.<sup>16</sup> If the first sense is the one Marx intends, then there is an obvious difficulty in understanding the character of the productive forces which would seem thereby to be construed as arising and functioning in some mysterious manner without the mediation of ideas. If the second, narrower sense still the problem of conceiving how the productive process could carry on without some "unscientific" ideas -- of good and bad, for instance -- accompanying, guiding and motivating the actions of the men concerned.

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<sup>15</sup>This point is made by each of C. Wright Mills (p. 106), Raymond Aron (p. 48) H.B. Acton (p. 167) and G.H. Sabine (A History of Political Theory (London: 1963) p. 786).

<sup>16</sup>R.N. Carew-Hunt (The Theory and Practice of Communism (London: 1962) p. 48) holds that Marx locates all ideas in the ideological superstructure; Marxist (e.g. Louis Althusser, For Marx, trans. Ben Brewster (London: 1969), p. 231, generally define ideology by distinguishing it from science; and John Plamenatz (p. 323 ff) claims that Marx variously describes ideology as ideas in general just normative or unscientific ideas, false ideas, and ideas favouring the ruling class.



If the third sense is meant, then there is the task of determining what criterion is to be employed in ascertaining whether or not an ideological form "favours" the ruling class (e.g. under what criterion is the "Love thy neighbour as thyself" commandment to be construed as a ruling class idea?). And if it is the final sense that Marx has in mind, there is the difficulty of showing that an idea which favours the ruling class is necessarily false and/or unscientific too.<sup>17</sup> In brief, Marx's concept of ideology is (in Professor Plamenatz's words) "extraordinarily confused".

5 What are "forms of social consciousness"? No one so far as I know (in the English speaking world, at least) has subjected this concept to critical scrutiny: doubtless because it has been assumed to be synonymous with "ideology". But Marx suggests that it is distinct from the latter (GID, 37), though he never explains how or, indeed, gives us any explicit characterization of it at all. So what is its meaning? It may, unlike the other categories, have escaped the censure of critics: yet as we remain without precise sense for it, it just as much invites elucidation.

6 The complex relationship denoted by "Technological Determinism" is no more illuminatingly conceived. For example, the nature of the "correspondence" between productive forces and the relations of production/Economic Structure -- a correspondence which bears

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<sup>17</sup>Carew-Hunt makes the first of these objections (p. 48), Acton the second (p. 178 ff) and Plamenatz (p. 330 ff) the last.

the main burden of what I have called Marx's "Technological Determinism" -- is unclear. If production relations are interpreted as purely technological relations obtaining between men at work, then there is indeed a correspondence between such relations and the productive forces, but only because the former are included in the latter. Since under this interpretation the claim in question is mere disguised tautology, Marx must mean something else. But if he means that production relations in another sense -- i.e. the sense of property relations -- "correspond" to the productive forces, he may escape the Scylla of tautology only to end in the Charybdis of error: for, as Raymond Aron among others has argued, "there may be exactly the same technical organization of agricultural production whether the land is the individual property of a great landowner, the collective property of producers' co-operatives or the property of the state."<sup>18</sup> Then there is the still further difficulty of which of the two "corresponding" factors Marx really thinks owns the status of primacy: there seems to be sufficient ambiguity to his position on this question for critics to have adopted quite different interpretations.<sup>19</sup> In other words, here yet again the general theoretical framework of Marx's work seems

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<sup>18</sup>Aron, p. 47.

<sup>19</sup>Sidney Hook, for example, (Towards an Understanding of Karl Marx, (London: 1933) pp. 126 and 156) firmly plumps for the primacy of the production relations, whereas Georgi Plekhanov (The Development of the Monist View of History, (Moscow: 1956) p. 207) just as firmly opts for the productive forces.

shot through with confusion.

7 Finally, the "Economic Determinism" relational complex -- that is, relations of production/Economic Structure determining the legal and political superstructure, ideology and forms of social consciousness among other things -- is problematic in the extreme. Indeed, one can say without much hesitation that no area of Marx's work has earned so much and so sustained critical attention. To catalogue the manifold objections that have been made in this regard -- that, for example, the relationship network in question involves a naive monocausality, a denial of human freedom and moral responsibility, an incompatibility with actual history, and so forth -- would require a study in itself. Suffice it to say; here that this aspect of Marx's theory abounds in reported difficulties (for more detailed account of these putative difficulties, see Chapter VII.

I have cited this formidable array of objections in order to indicate how considerable are the problems confronting any exposition of the structure of Marx's world-view. However, there is yet another crucial difficulty -- very prominent in the critical literature on Marx -- which I have not mentioned. That is, Marx's mature world-view or general theoretical framework seems to be altogether devoid of a position on the nature or properties of man himself, the ultimate historical agency whose inherent or constitutional needs, capacities and so forth would seem necessarily to underlie everything else to which Marx refers. This is the area of what is conventionally called "human nature" and Marx's inquiry



into the "material foundations" of history is said by many -- hostile and sympathetic to his work -- to completely extrude from positive consideration such a factor: the position here being that Marx held that man has no constitutional properties at all but is utter plasticity being exhaustively formed by his sociohistorical conditions. Louis Althusser (a self-described Marxist) approvingly names this Marx's post 1845 "theoretical anti-humanism" in his Lire le Capital and elsewhere<sup>20</sup> while Robert Tucker (an anti-Marxist, who disapproves) says in his Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx, "the very idea of man has seemingly gone out the window".<sup>21</sup> Much the same sort of view can be found throughout commentary on Marx's later works: both pro- and anti-Marx interpretators agreeing that Marx denied there was such a thing as a "human nature" -- a set of constitutional properties of man -- in his mature writings.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Lire le Capital, Vol. II (Paris: 1967), p. 32-4; For Marx, p. 255 ff.

<sup>21</sup>Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx (Cambridge: 1961) p. 166.

<sup>22</sup>Eugene Kamenka (in his The Ethical Foundations of Marxism (London: 1962) p. 130) says that "since Marx's new underlying reality is to be society and no longer man, he is forced ... to treat man as no more than a mere reflection or product of social relations". But, Kamenka goes on to say (p. 162), "what things are is prior to their possible adjustments --" and hence the nature Marx, in ignoring the "positive character" of human beings underlying socio-historical "adjustments", is left with a "servile" vision of man who is, and is no more than, a passive reflection of his social circumstances. As so many others who interpret Marx in this way, whether or not they object to his view (like a Kamenka) or concur with it (like virtually all orthodox Marxists), arises from Marx's famous sixth theses on Feuerbach where he says:

But the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each cont'd

Now if there is such a denial and theoretical extrusion of the constitutional properties of man in Marx's mature work, it seems indeed a significant deficiency. Some of the more obvious and closely related specific difficulties which seems to follow are (aside from the sheer unintelligibility of imagining man as having no inherent characteristics at all: a position that seems to arise from the fallacy of inferring amorphousness from development):

a) Marx's "forces of production" are left without any explanatory base whatever: as Norman Carew-Hunt puts it, "We are left to suppose that with Marx the productive forces somehow arise and develop automatically".<sup>23</sup>

b) All motivation and enablement must in Marx's theory be accounted for in terms that never involve or presuppose any property of human nature: so that, say workers submitting to or revolting against their masters through history must be satisfactorily explained without ever identifying or presupposing constitutional requirements of man; or, again, the oppression of ruling classes through history

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cont'd... single individual. In its reality (Werklichkeit) it is the ensemble of social relations (GID, 632). However, all that Marx is claiming here is (in a crude form) what he claims throughout his subsequent work: that is, that the "base", "form", "structure", "anatomy" or (as here) "essence" of human affairs is the totality of social relations. He is not opposing a notion of human nature simpliciter, but is objecting to an idealist version of it. And he is not depriving inherent human properties of explanatory status altogether, but is saying that "in its reality" (in practice) the "human essence" is social as opposed to atomistic.

<sup>23</sup>The Theory and Practice of Communism (London: 1962)  
p. 48.

can never be construed as such in terms of violation of inborn human needs and capacities for variety of movement or material self-realization. Either Marx allows some status to such constitutional properties of man, or his theory fails wherever social conditioning cannot explain all (i.e. continuously).

c) Since there is no human nature, then the capitalist society Marx opposes has no fault other than hindrance of productive forces and the communist society he envisages has no human point other than growth of such forces. Hence Marx's vision is wholly technocratic, compatible with a communist society of robots. (This view is not, it should be added, a "difficulty" for everyone: orthodox Marxists who hold Marx has no notion of human nature are unavoidably committed to defending just such a view, which seems often to precisely suit their dispositions).

These kinds of objection invite the postulation of a new primitive category in Marx's general theoretical framework. But they do not in themselves justify it. We require what Marx himself says and implies on this matter, and in the next pages I will try to provide just this. When I have done so, it will be clear I think that a category of "human nature", constituting the very underpinnings of his world view, is amply indicated in Marx's mature writings. Thus, from here on in, we will be considering a six factor framework, with "Human Nature" as its new first category. Demonstration of the legitimacy of this inclusion of a further general factor in Marx's theoretical framework follows, in Chapter I.



I have now come to the end of the more fundamental and well known objections that have been raised over the years against various features of Marx's theoretical framework: and I have postulated a new general category of this framework, "Human Nature". I will now proceed to an exposition of this six-factor framework which I think, shall meet the objections in question as well as provide in outline the underlying structure of Marx's profuse corpus. Though I will at times venture somewhat beyond the letter of Marx's texts in this exposition (mainly to surmount ambiguity), my enterprise will not violate any of Marx's own claims. Any elaborations will complement, not subvert.

The order in which I will examine the major general categories and relationships constituting what I have titled "The Structure of Marx's World-View", will be as follows:

Chapter I	Human Nature
Chapter II	Forces of Production
Chapter III	Relations of Production/Economic Structure
Chapter IV	Legal and Political Superstructure
Chapter V	Ideology
Chapter VI	Forms of Social Consciousness
Chapter VII	<del>Economic Determinism</del>
Chapter VIII	Technological Determinism

Needless to say, my exposition will have to remain in general terms: that is, the application of these categories and relationships to specific historical epochs will be avoided except insofar as the embracing concepts in question are meaningfully illuminated by examples drawn from particular periods (e.g. the epoch of capitalism). However, inasmuch as we are dealing with the conceptual foundations of a philosophy of history, with the basic schema of an

overview that takes in all periods of man's recorded time on earth, the maintenance of a high level of generality is unavoidable. But if philosophy is to be distinguished from other sorts of inquiry by anything, it may be by precisely the high level of generality that expediency compels us to remain on here. Some virtue thus may be perceived in our necessity.

## CHAPTER I

### HUMAN NATURE

The final objection to Marx's general theoretical framework cited in our introductory chapter was that there was nothing at all about "human nature", about the properties of man himself, in Marx's post-1845 work. Since this objection suggests a radical blank in Marx's overview of the sociohistorical condition, I shall cater to it first. When I have shown that he does in fact sponsor in his mature work a definite and substantial position on this ontological substructure of society and history, human nature -- which position has not before been systematically exhibited -- I shall as I have said count this position as constituting the primitive factor in the structure of his world-view.

It is first of all worth noting that Marx implies a "human-nature" factor by his very concept of the forces of production. Of the forces of production we may say, in advance of the section devoted to this category, that for Marx they necessarily involve developed labour-power competences and they are by definition capable of making material use-values. But labour-power competences and material use-values themselves must presuppose, respectively, definite capacities and needs of man himself out of which they are

developed and to which they are useful: ergo forces of production presuppose such needs and capacities, and a notion of human nature in these respects seems implicit in Marx's theory from the start. Hence he says such things as "Man develops his slumbering powers" (CI, 177) and "No production without a need" (G, 92).

In short a notion of human nature involving at least needs and capacities seems postulated, if only implicitly, in Marx's theoretical framework by his very idea of the forces of production. As we shall soon discover, such needs and capacities of human nature are not only so presumed by Marx's category of productive forces, but form the explicit substance of his concept of human nature too. But let us advance straightway to what he actually says in this connection.

In a too rarely observed passage in Capital, Marx suggests to us a program for dealing with the human nature factor of history. Polemicizing against the Utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham who, Marx opines, has a grotesque "shopkeeper" view of man, he says:

To know what is useful for a dog, one must study dog nature.... Applying this to man, he that would criticize all human acts, movements, relations etc. by the principle of utility, must first deal with human nature in general and then with human nature as modified in each historical epoch. (CI, 609)

What is of special interest to us in this passage is that Marx -- quite in opposition to what so many of his critics have claimed -- clearly accepts the legitimacy of a notion of human nature. Indeed he proposes such a notion as necessary to certain systems of thought. It may in fact be held that since Marx himself "criticizes human



acts, movements, relations, etc. by the principle of utility" (i.e. most of his polemic against the capitalist order arises of the latter's systematic dedication to exchange-value rather than use-value), he himself commits his theory to the project of "dealing with" man's nature in both its "general" and "historical" aspects. Certainly his remark in The German Ideology that "one of the most vital principles of communism" is its "empiric view, based upon a knowledge of man's nature" (GID, 593) justifies such a conclusion. Not only then does Marx's aside to Bentham, as well as other remarks, indicate that he accepted the validity of a concept of man's nature, but that he insisted on it for anyone employing a utilitarian approach in his work (i.e. himself)<sup>1</sup>.

Working now according to the frame of his own program, we will attempt to outline what Marx's ideas on man's "general" and "historical" nature in fact are. But before engaging with what he has to say in these respects, it is important to make clear the distinction between "human nature in general" and "human nature as modified in each historical epoch". The former refers to the properties of man conceived generally and independently of particular historical forms (e.g. man's species need for food or nutrition), whereas the latter refers to the same properties conceived in a

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<sup>1</sup>Marx is not, of course, a utilitarian in the Benthamite sense; but the "principle of utility" -- without Bentham's "shop-keeper" calculus et al -- is central to his work, providing indeed the ultimate rationale of his cardinal emphasis on the forces of production.

definite historical context (e.g. the nineteenth century European man's cultural need for food or nutrition that lives up to the specific established standards of his society). Hence the former's referent is general and constant, whereas the latter's referent is particular and changing.

# 1.

## Human Nature in General

When he talks about man as a species, Marx is fond of pursuing the traditional philosophical strategy of distinguishing him from the animal. In one well known passage from the German Ideology, for example, he tells us that men can be distinguished from animals by virtue of their "consciousness", their "religion", or "anything else you like". But, he goes on to say, man actually raises himself above the animals only when he starts to produce his own means of staying alive: "They (men) distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence ..." (GID, 31). Since for Marx the differentia specifica of human behaviour is that man alone produces his means of life, it would seem to follow that what he construes as the special capacity enabling such productiveness must be for him the differentia specifica of man's nature.

In a nuclear discussion in Capital on the labour process, Marx clearly implies what this special capacity is. It is man's creative intelligence. Again in this passage, Marx pursues the

traditional procedure of distinguishing man from animal:

We presuppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst of architects from the best of bees is this: that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement. He not only effects a change of form on the material on which he works, but he also realizes a purpose of his own that gives the law to his modus operandi, and to which he must subordinate his will. (CI, 179)

It is important to emphasize that in this paragraph Marx explicitly demurs from making his distinction between man and animal merely in terms of behaviour, as in his earlier passage in The German Ideology. Indeed he says that in terms of actual behaviour, the spider and the bee carry out as complex "operations" and "constructions" as an architect. But their activities are mere executions of nature given "instinct", whereas man's activities express a mentally structured "purpose" or "plan" that is raised by his own "imagination" and then realized in project-commanded activity. In other words, the differentia specifica of man that Marx proposes seems to have moved from an outward, behavioural difference (In The German Ideology) to a difference in intrinsic being itself (Capital). Contrary to conventional interpretation, the later Marx here appears to grant more rather than less status to the immanent nature of man in explaining the human condition. It is certainly true that on the whole Marx writes far less, quantitatively speaking, in this regard than in his pre-1845 work, but he by no means contradicts his early

"humanist" position: rather he presupposes it for the most part as a given. In the passage above from Capital, we simply encounter this given made more or less explicit.

I shall call this special property of human nature which for Marx enables man uniquely to "raise a structure in his imagination and execute it in reality" the capacity of projective consciousness. This phrase is meant not only to draw instructive connection between Marx and Sartre, as well as to represent by the phrase's literal meaning the sense of Marx's position itself, but to link Marx in some way with others in the past, like Aristotle and his notion of man's elevated faculty for poiesis (which is more suggestive of Marx's position here than the Greek praxis, which with Aristotle meant "doing" as opposed to "making": 1140a<sup>2</sup> Nicomachean Ethics). Of course, the kinds of similarities between Marx's concept of a distinctive human capacity to "raise a structure in the imagination" and then "erect it in reality" and the whole Western philosophical tradition of mind as the unique feature of man (his "divine element", his "pilot", his "light of reason" and so forth) are too manifest to labour upon here any further. But what does deserve attention, what perhaps does mark Marx off from most of this mainstream tradition is his emphasis on the creative dimension of mind (not a Democritean atom system<sup>2</sup> nor a Humean "association" mechanism);

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<sup>2</sup>Marx, it is interesting to note, in his 1841 doctoral thesis on Democritus and Epicurus, favoured the latter's theory because it allowed for a free "swerve" in atoms in contrast to the cont'd



as well as, at least equally important, his anti-dualistic emphasis on its giving the law to action (not essentially contemplative as with the ancients, nor retrospective like Hegel's Owl of Minerva which "only takes flight when the shades of twilight have fallen").<sup>3</sup>

This species-distinctive capacity for "projective consciousness" which Marx postulates in man is the legislative-executive agency informing all the latter's uniquely human productive feats. It is the human-nature cognate of homo faber. However, it is limited, curtailed, perverted or otherwise determined (in ways the rest of this essay will attend to), it still is what specially enables man to be a "toolmaking animal": to be so "many sided" in his constructions, to wield nature as "one of the organs of his activity", and

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cont'd... former's notion of atomic motion which was strictly mechanistic. Marx makes it clear in this place that he preferred Epicurus's theory, even though it was less consistent and more dogmatic than Democritus's, solely because it permitted on the atomic level some "subjecthood" to matter, some "energizing principle" which could provide a theoretical basis to human freedom or, more specifically, the "freedom of self-consciousness". (See Normal D. Livergood's Activity in Marx Philosophy (The Hague: 1967) for the complete version of Marx's thesis).

<sup>3</sup>Marx adopts an intransigently "anti-dualistic" position in two important respects. First, as I have just indicated and as he declares more forcefully in the famous theses on Feuerbach, mind is to be considered as having "objective truth" or "reality" only insofar as it is realized in practice ("The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking that is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question": his emphasis). Secondly, and more fundamentally so far as an anti-dualistic stance goes, he refuses any distinct ontological status or realm for mind (against the tradition manned by Plato and Descartes) and seems to regard mind merely as a way of talking about highly developed "matter which thinks". We might characterize the first of these positions as an anti-dualist epistemology and the second as an anti-dualist metaphysics.

to perform all the other constructive negations of the productive forces impacting on the world as it is (to cite a heady proclamation of his early work: "the history of industry is ... the open book of man's essential powers, the exposure to the five senses of human psychology." (EPM, 109, his emphases). It is, in short the ultimate, if not sufficient, source of what Marx elsewhere calls man's "positive freedom" (thus he says, again in his pre-1846 writing, that "freedom is thoroughly the essence of man"<sup>4</sup>; otherwise put, man's freedom owns an intrinsic, human-natural base).

But a few further explications are in order. First of all, it is instructive to consider this special human capacity of "projective consciousness" as a capacity which achieves its "truly human" expression for Marx in what we would call creative art: here both the inventive and implementive aspects of this capacity are in his view most freely and integrally expressed (G, 611)<sup>5</sup>. In such creative

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<sup>4</sup>Kamenka, The Ethical Foundations of Marxism, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup>There may however be the objection here that Marx's distinction between the "raising the structure in imagination" phase of human production and the "erecting in reality" phase can plausibly work with the architect's blueprint and the actual building following therefrom, but manifestly not with the more thoroughgoing art forms of literature, music and painting: each of the latter's project and execution phases are not typically separate, but part of one integral activity. At this point, we need to get clear what Marx means by "erecting in reality". Marx, like Feuerbach, counts as a criterion of something being "erected in reality" the social character of its materialization. Given this, we can see that the suspected problem does not then arise. The division between a structure "being raised in the imagination" and "being erected in reality" can aptly fall between manuscript and publication or, again, between musician's score and the playing of it, between studio canvas and its cont'd

art (Marx's example is the "composition" of the writer), both the project and its execution are unconstrained by extrinsic dictate and united in the same productive agent, unlike the "antagonistic" and "unfree" forms of almost all historical production. The ultimate end of post-historical communist society is in fact, Marx implies here and elsewhere, to provide those technical and economic conditions whereby all men's productive activity can achieve precisely this status of creative art, whereby all men's projective consciousness or "creative dispositions" can seek "absolute elaboration -- without any preconditions" (Pre-C, 85). Man the Producer is in the end for Marx, Man the Artist.

Secondly, Marx's description in the Capital passage above by no means rules out the possibility of collective plans or projects and collective execution. The operation of such collective projective consciousness can take either of two extremes for Marx: production where the "head" and the "hand" of the social organism altogether "part company" (extreme division of labour) and become "deadly foes" (CI, 508); or production where the collective labourer is exhaustively communist and the plans and execution are performed

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cont'd... public exhibition. In brief, it seems that the two-phase logic Marx imputes to the operation of "projective consciousness" can be maintained intact whatever the productive activity in question may be. The first phase is the creative preparation period as a whole -- whether the artist preparing the finished form of his canvas or the factory master preparing his final production plans -- and the second phase is the actual production of the project in material, social form.



together: the "tribal community, the natural commonbody" (Pre-C, 68) of man's being dialectically fulfilled in the so to say concrete universal of communism. The former of these forms occupies all previous, class-divided history and the latter is the "realm of Freedom" (CIII, 821), the post-historical utopia. In this latter, the "heads" and "hands" of all unite in thoroughly co-operative and unantagonistically integrated production. Here a social architect, everyone planning and acting in full community, projects and implements as a completely integrated whole, as the original architect writ huge (though it would be foolish to think that Marx imagined the operation of this collective projective consciousness as the only form in which men could realize themselves in the future society: the individual enterprise assuredly does not disappear here -- though some detractors of Marx's vision would have it that way -- as Marx makes quite clear in his talk about the "absolute elaboration of creative dispositions without any preconditions" in his Grundrisse description of the creative possibilities of post-bourgeois society).

Thirdly, and most fundamentally, the special projective consciousness of man which marks him off from the other species presupposes for Marx man's status as a "social animal" (not, of course, in the sense above, but rather in the sense that consciousness of any human sort presupposes social intercourse whereby its currency of language may come to exist). "Consciousness", he says, "is from the very beginning a social product and remains so as long as men exist at all". (GID, 42) Hence, for Marx, to say that man has



consciousness, productive or otherwise, is to imply also his sociality -- his situation (if only, as Robinson Crusoe, in the past) amidst the interpersonal connectives of language, conventions, tools, co-operative labour and so forth from which stably formed unities of conception can arise.

This is not, of course, to say, as some have interpreted Marx as saying, that man is inherently "social" in the sense of altruistic; social relationship does not, clearly, imply social benevolence: though it is for Marx a necessary condition of its possibility and though there is, in the early Marx, good evidence he believed (with Feuerbach) that man's power to conceptualize others as members of the same species rendered human or "species" beings (Gattungswesen) intrinsically empathetic (I think it is his later rejection of this belief in a sort of conceptual communism that constitutes the principle difference between Marx's early and mature views of human nature).

Now the theme of man's differentia specifica residing in (what I have called) "projective consciousness" persists throughout Marx's work. Over twenty years before the above passage in human labour appeared in Capital, he says much the same thing -- more turgidly -- in the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts: while discussing, again, how man differs in nature from the animal:

...Free conscious activity is man's species character....The animal is immediately identical with its life-activity....Man makes his life-activity itself the object of his will and consciousness....Conscious life-activity directly distinguishes man from animal life-activity....Admittedly animals also produce.

They build themselves nests, dwellings, like the bees, beavers, ants, etc....But man in the working up of the objective world ...duplicates himself not only, as in consciousness, intellectually but also actively, in reality, and therefore he contemplates himself in a world he has created. (EPM, 75-6)

Elsewhere Marx talks more perfunctorily of man's special "ability to think" (GID, 315) "intellectual faculties" (WLC, 73) and "natural thinking process" (SC, 315) and so forth. And he is quite explicit in Capital and other places that the forces of production are the "materialization" of the sovereign workings of this distinctive mental capacity. "Man...is...a living conscious thing," he says, "and labour is the manifestation of this power residing in him" (CI, 202) or, in the Grundrisse:

Nature builds no machines, no locomotives, railways, electric telegraphs, self-acting mules, etc....These are organs of the human brain, created by the human hand; the power of knowledge, objectified. (G, 706)

The capacity then of "projective consciousness" seems then to be for Marx the essential feature of human nature: the long hidden key to understanding his concept of man from the Manuscripts to Capital. Why has it been so often overlooked by those (pro and anti-Marxist alike) who ascribe to Marx a crude behaviourist position, a position which putatively construes man as only a passive reflexive product of socio-economic conditions? Let me, very briefly, suggest three reasons. First of all there is a strong tendency in scholarship on Marx to wrongly interpret what he says about "ideology" being a "reflex" of the forces and relations of production as statements on human consciousness as such (see Chapter V). Second, Marx's

great emphasis on the influence of specific material conditions upon men and his correspondingly great scorn for wholly "abstract" conceptions easily but mistakenly leads to the conclusion that he rejected general conceptions of man, conceptions of human nature, altogether. (The second error, as one can see, tends to ground the first.) And thirdly, reinforcing both of the above, Marx simply has very little to say of a systematic or sustained sort on human nature in his post-1845 writings: not because he denies the existence or causal status of such but because (as I have said) he presupposes it for the most part as a given. Hence even in his <sup>m</sup>ature work where he says little of a direct sort on the category in question, the notion of a human nature -- with the essential "species character" of projective consciousness -- seems to underlie his most fundamental concerns: seems to underlie, for example, his calls for "conscious plan" in social production, his indignation at the reduction of human work to dictated and "mindless detail task", his preoccupation with the profit imperative of the capitalist system "blindly" governing human productive activity, his disdain for ideas and thoughts not carried into praxis, and so on. Indeed I think it is impossible to make sense of the very vocabulary of Marx and its unremittent use of such terms as "brutalizing", "alienating", "monstrous", "inhuman", "savage", "ghoulish", "bestial" and so on unless one acknowledges in all such usage a presupposed concept of human nature: unless one discerns an underlying positive notion of what man intrinsically is which makes these terms meaningful and



not merely senseless diatribe. To call something "inhuman" presumes, of necessity, an idea of what is "human". And it is difficult to miss Marx's tendency to employ such terms as the above whenever he sees capitalist circumstances as having robbed men of the exercise of their creative intelligence.

But Marx does not only construe the nature of man as characterized by an essential capacity to construct a project and command its fulfillment in reality, but by a corresponding essential need to do so too. This need is suggested one way or another from Marx's earliest to his latest writings. Hence we find such phrases as man's "need for his own realization" (EPM, 112) or "need for universality" (PofP, 125) scattered throughout his work; and similarly, statements indicating that men are driven to liberate themselves from oppressive social conditions by a "definite need" to achieve the freedom for material self-realization (GID, 331). When this emancipated social situation is secured, he makes clear on several occasions, then (and these words are taken from his post-1845 work), creative work will be allowed its proper status as "life's prime want" (GP, 17) and the untrammelled realization of "what lies within" will incite men as "an end in itself" (Pre-C, 85). Men's socioeconomic circumstances will, at last, "be worthy of human nature." (CIII, 821).

In the Grundrisse (as elsewhere) Marx attacks the common conception that productive work must somehow be a "sacrifice", must be something one does merely instrumentally to secure the means of



staying alive:

It seems quite far from [Adam] Smith's mind that the individual 'in his normal state of health, strength, activity, skill, facility,' needs a normal portion of work....Smith has no inkling whatever that this overcoming of obstacles is itself a liberating activity -- and that, further, the external aims become stripped of the semblance of merely external natural urgencies, and become posited as aims which the individual himself posits -- hence as self-realization, objectification of the subject, hence real freedom, whose action is, precisely, labour.  
(G, 611)

"He is right of course", Marx goes on to say:

that in its historic forms as slave-labour, serf-labour and wage-labour, labour always appears as repulsive, always as external forced labour; and not-labour, by contrast, as 'freedom and happiness'.

But work in which man is not thus constrained, but freely realizes his subjecthood in creative praxis, this "unadulterated" form of work is what man needs qua man: it is "life's prime want" for the truly human existence.

The "essence" of man's nature for Marx, thus, is not only the species distinctive capacity of projective consciousness, but the cognate need of man to realize such consciousness in free production. This capacity-need conjunct constitutes the basic -- if generally unseen -- substance of his notion of man and, as such, comprises the very underpinnings of his world-view.

However, Marx's position on "human nature in general" is not confined to this essence-conjunct. He also makes numerous fleeting references to man's constitutional needs for (and these seem to be distinct, discrete needs for him): food, clothing, habitation (GID, 39), sexual relationship (EPM, 101), and less banal, fresh

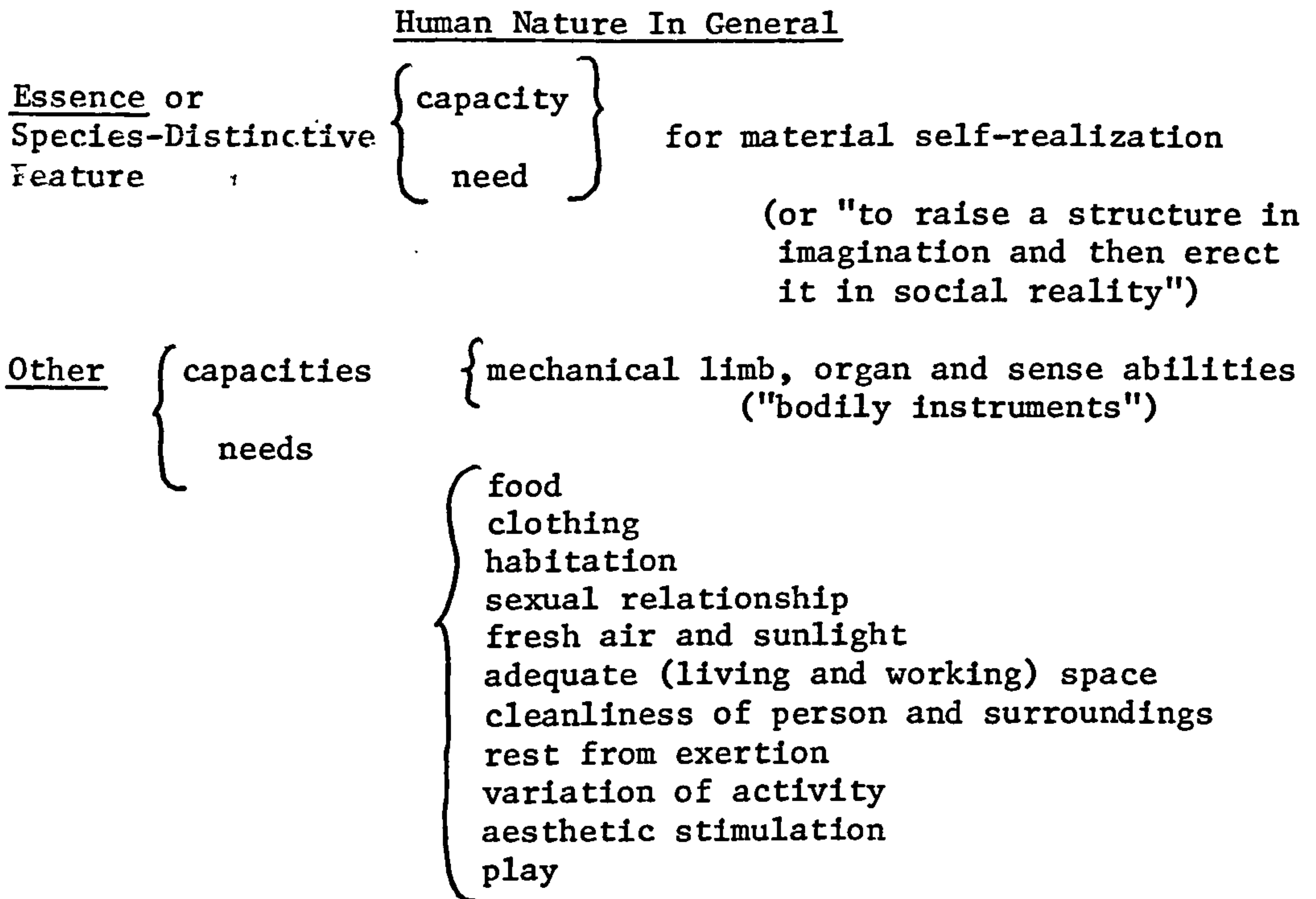
air and sunlight (CI, 265, 426, 465) adequate living and working space (CI, 482 and 657-91), cleanliness of person and surroundings (CI, 232 and 381), rest from exertion (CI, 232 and 527), variation of activity (CI, 363 and 341, 360, 440, 484-8), aesthetic stimulation (S-VI, 392 and CI, 232) and play (GID, 459 and WLC, 77)<sup>6</sup>. And hardly surprisingly, he alludes frequently to the more obvious human mechanical capacities associated with the five senses, limbs, organs and so forth (the "bodily instruments"). This cluster of other human capacities and needs fleshes out, as it were, his view of man conceived "in general". It is worthwhile, I think, casting this view in a summative schematic form: not only because it deserves

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<sup>6</sup>In The German Ideology, Marx says:  
 life involves before everything else eating and drinking, a habitation, clothing and many other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs.

What I have tried to do above is derive from Marx's texts the needs for the "many other things" he mentions in the above passage: needs which, as those he identifies above, are ontologically prior to man's "first historical act". In most cases, the phraseology he uses -- "necessity", "very roots of life", "essential", etc. -- indicate the constitutional quality of the needs in question. But I must acknowledge here that the so to say enjoyment needs I have imputed to Marx's notion of man -- the needs for sexual relationship (as opposed to species-reproduction as such), for aesthetic stimulation, and for play -- are probably overdrawn in my account. On the whole Marx's notion of man seems importantly blind to erotic intercourse, contemplative pleasure and playfulness as intrinsically satisfying and indeed needed forms of human life. There is a somewhat chilling sternness to his view of man -- typical of the Western philosophic tradition, especially the German -- which I have softened by a kind of exegetical legerdemain in the above cases. Though I shall not mention this issue again I regard Marx's general indifference to such joyful facets of human existence as one of the more lamentable shortcomings of his world view.

considered pause for itself, but because nothing like it has been hitherto reported in literature on Marx:



This schema of "human nature in general" (deliberately drawn almost entirely from his post-1845 writings) works out, as one can see, to be a remarkably comprehensive one: especially considering the common view that in his post-1845 years he "threw man out the window", saw him as a "passive reflex" of economic conditions, was a "theoretical antihumanist", and so on. Here indeed we see the underlying dynamis of Marx's system, the generating power behind all man's technical, economic, legal, political and ideological activities. How this Promethean agency (and I use "Promethean" advisedly: Prometheus was "the first saint of the philosophical calendar" for Marx; Promethean imagery of "fetters bursting" is his favorite mode of describing



social revolution; and the word "Pro-metheus" means literally the fore-sight which he counted as man's constitutional essence), how this agency is and has been bound in Marx's view upon the rock of socio-historical conditions will be the subject of most of the rest of this essay. But, although Marx certainly saw man's nature as coercively "determined", even "drained", by such material conditions it is precisely his view of man's nature which underlies his thundering denunciations of such "inhuman" constraints. To miss this is, simply, to miss the ground of his entire Weltanschauung.

What is undoubtedly most striking about Marx's concept of human nature is the inherent generative force it imputes to man. Man is, for Marx, by the very needs of his nature impelled to ever more productive undertakings, which his special, intrinsic capacities are uniquely able to prosecute. Not only are there the numerous needs for biochemical replenishment and protection to incite him into action, but the many needs for various forms of activity as such: the essential one of these latter being, as we have seen, the need to raise a project in the imagination and execute it in reality, the need to "produce" as an end-in-itself. Hence man for Marx is by his very constitution continually excited into activity, forever pressed by intrinsic demand into vital material expressiveness whose most truly human form is work in its "unadulterated" form, or a productive activity akin to creative art. Now it is assuredly the case as I have noted that historical labour for Marx -- slave, serf or wage -- has only been permitted by technical and



economic circumstances to exhibit "transitory and inferior forms". But it is exactly because it has frustrated man's intrinsic drive for "truly human" work that Marx considers it "inferior" and requiring sublation, given the appropriate material circumstances of non-scarcity and social collectivity, in the projectively and executively unconstrained production of the "Realm of Freedom". This "Realm of Freedom" permits the activity of material self-realization "without preconditions" and yields thereby, in the young Marx's words, the "reappropriation of the human essence" (EPM, 102). Once this state of affairs is achieved, man cannot cease his restless "elaboration of what lies within", even though all his sustenance requirements are increasingly fulfilled by a "self-acting" or automated production apparatus. (G, 704-6). On the contrary, man is for Marx impelled by the very essence of his nature to go on creating, materializing his projects -- from, contra Kamenka, his material security as springboard -- with the "most intense exertion" (G, 611) of the driven artist he seems for Marx ultimately to be. Indeed the satisfaction of his "mundane needs" releases man to truly realize his "creative dispositions": the "mere bodily needs" having been the source of "Adam's curse" all along (i.e. the demander of toil and the lever of exploitation). In sum, Marx's concept of man -- as his great emphasis elsewhere on production, on revolution and on the epistemology of praxis suggest -- is above all activist: man for him can no more relinquish his enabled drive for material self-realization than he can cease to be man. The entire theoretical

construct of Marx rests on this human-natural premise.

Considering together all that Marx suggests about "human nature in general," the overall shape we have is of a dynamic nexus of capacities and needs whose essential spring is the capacity -- need conjunct to raise a project or plan and then realize it in production. The needs of man's nature are what impel him into action ("no-one" says Marx "ever does anything without doing it for the sake of one or other of his needs" (GID, 276). The capacities of his nature are what enable him to act. The primary historical expression of these impelling needs, and enabling capacities, in turn, are the forces of production which in one for another fulfill (and shape) both. Therein the bridge between potentia and actualization, between subject and object is forged. With the forces of production the nature of man is confronted in its historically objectified form, and the conventional nub of historical materialism emerges into view. We now move, thus, from the more or less presupposed dynamic in Marx's general schema, human nature, to the explicitly stated motor force, the productive system itself -- the server, and expressor, of the former in materialized form.

## 2.

### Man's Nature as Historically Modified

As we earlier discovered in his remark on Bentham, Marx's program for the analysis of "human nature" prescribes not only a treatment of this factor "in general" but of it "as modified in

each historical epoch." In many places in his corpus, Marx makes it clear that he regards this historicization of man's nature as continuous and substantial. Hence before he suggests how man's nature is uniquely capable of creative production in the Capital passage cited at the beginning of the last section, he says of man's productive activities:

By thus acting on the external world and changing it man at the same time changes his own nature". (CI, 178)

Then, in The Poverty of Philosophy, he remarks:

All history is nothing but the transformation of human nature". (PofP, 128)

Because man's inherent properties are so viewed as in an increasing process of historical modification, Marx refers in the third volume of Capital to man's having "a second nature" (CIII, 859). (It is, of course, remarks like the above which have tempted the erroneous orthodoxy about Marx having viewed human nature as a sort of complex conditioned reflex.)

There are a number of points to be made straightway about Marx's idea here of an historicized human nature:

a) The "modification", "change" or "transformation" of "human nature" of which Marx speaks is never conceived by him as alteration with respect to general content: as emphasized earlier, "human nature in general" remains the same, all modification of it being in terms of its determinate particulars (e.g. the general need for food is, qua general, transhistorical: but its determinate particulars of quality, range, mode of satisfaction and so on are determined

by the sociohistorical conditions in which it is contextualized). Otherwise put, historical alteration of human nature is always within certain universal parameters.

b) (relatedly) As with "human nature in general", "human nature as modified in each historical epoch" is considered in terms of capacities and needs (the essential capacity and essential need remaining, of course, the capacity and need to raise a structure in the imagination and execute it in reality.)

c) Man's capacities and needs are seen to modify primarily through the influence of the forces of production via -- to compel a treatise into a few phrases -- the skills they demand, the material products they provide, the human connections they involve, and the alteration of physical environment they effect: which complex influence in affecting both capacities and needs simultaneously cause these to modify in a more or less corresponding manner.

d) The forces of production are viewed by Marx as developing historically in the general direction of increasing complexity and quantity of output (the basis, in Marx's case, of the so-called "illusion of progress"): hence the capacities and needs of human nature which they modify are seen to be modified in a correspondingly progressive direction (to be more specifically characterized in the remainder of this section).

e) Since the productive forces are themselves of man's making, their influence on man is ultimately man's influence on himself: the historicization of human nature is in a sense, therefore, the



self-creating of man ("man contemplates himself in a world he has created" EPM, p. 76).

Let us now, more specifically, consider the historical modification of what Marx regarded as the essential capacity of human nature -- the capacity for (what I have called) "projective consciousness".

As indicated in (c) above, the historical modification of this (or any other) capacity obtains for Marx primarily through the influence of the forces of production: or, more precisely, in accordance with the development of the productive forces. Hence Marx says:

In reality this [any] barrier to consciousness corresponds to a definite degree of development of the forces of material production. (G,541)

Now the principle of modification which Marx implies here, and elsewhere, is that of limitation of consciousness, extending its domain of permission with the development of the productive forces. That is, in our terminology, the capacity of projective consciousness is historically modified for Marx in terms of its functionable range, which "functionable range" increases with technological advancement (i.e. development of the forces of production). Such historicization -- which is not in terms of mental content (e.g. scientific know-how, which belongs to the productive forces themselves; religion, philosophy et al., which belong to ideology), but in lower order terms of underlying capacity itself and its "domain of permission" or "functionable range" -- would be exemplified

in the following paradigm. The rural Indian Hindu has the natural mental capacity to master the cognitive moves involved in, say, the technique of butchering and preparing cattle for food. However this underlying capacity has been "blocked" or rendered unable to function in the appropriate manner as a result of the miserable forces of production of the society in which he lives. That is, cattle are virtually the only source of technologically utilizable non-human power available: consequently cattle cannot be slaughtered for food without ruinously damaging already meagre forces of production. Because, then, of the severe limitations of the latter, an "ideological reflex" -- a taboo against killing cattle -- is raised: which taboo in natural capacity terms is (though not necessarily) an historically imposed "limitation" on the functionable range of the Indians' intrinsic capacity of consciousness. Because of this so to say mind-barrier blocking his mental potential the Indian peasant is unable to operate in the direction of learning the said technique; the state of his society's productive forces has given rise to cognitive boundaries beyond which he cannot normally go. If, however, the technical onslaughts of British Imperialism progressively eliminate the material conditions formerly inhibiting the peasant's ability to utilize the relevant mental powers, then the latter's old "frame of mind" on the issue (and many others) is likely to broaden and the constitutional capacity to learn the technique in question will to that extent be freed to operate in the appropriate way. In such a case, the Indian's inherent mental

powers will have increased their "functionable range". Later, the peasant may actually cash in on this mind historicization, on this extension of the mind's functionable ambit, and actually learn the technique of killing and preparing cattle for food. In other words, there are three conceptually distinct stages to our paradigm narrative:

- a) capacity of projective consciousness somehow blocked (i.e. retardation)
- b) such capacity released from the block in question (i.e. readiness)
- c) possible new formulations of consciousness (i.e. learning)

Marx himself provides us with most of the material for such a paradigm in an article in the New York Daily Tribune, 1852 (OB, 397). Here he argues that a "vegetative" mode of production and "miserable" natural resource conditions, among other things, bottle up the rural Indian's consciousness: in his own words, "restraining the human mind within the smallest possible compass...enslaving...depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies". It is largely because British imperialism -- despite all its cruelty, greed and hypocrisy -- removes these thought-shackling conditions and allows the mind to range more freely, that Marx regards it as a "civilizing force". It is civilizing because it effects a great development in the productive conditions, a change which results in the liberation of mental "energies" which have long been "restrained", "enslaved" and "deprived". Further examples of this motion of mind



barriers imposed and/or dissolved through the influence of productive conditions are found throughout Marx's work. Thus a "too lavish" natural environment may "keep man in hand, like a child in leading strings", preventing the utilization of his powers -- mental and otherwise -- by its anaesthetizing, Lotusland-like abundance (CI, 513). Similarly, conventional productive tasks may contain the mind's powers within a narrow compass -- by the "barbarian egotism" of individual plot tillage, (OB, 397), by the "craft idiocy" of the medieval guild (PofP, 125) or by the exclusive "detail tasks" of manufacturing capitalism (CI, 363). Advances in the forces of production, on the other hand, can liberate consciousness from its old barriers: "revolutionizing people's minds" (CI, 483). Thus the productive forces as they develop and progress from ancient to modern forms more and more allow an "imagination freed" from, among other things, mythology (CPE, 216). In all such cases, historical modification of man's intrinsic capacity of projective consciousness has to do with the raising and removing of blocks (or "limitations") to its functionable range through the influence of developing forces of production.

In other places, Marx places complementary emphasis on the role of the production relations/Economic Structure (which "correspond" to the productive forces) in influencing the "functionable range" of man's consciousness. Just as much as productive forces, the economic base is for him (despite his occasional exclusive emphasis on the former) responsible for the limitations



involved in the historicization of the capacity in question. Thus though the capitalist era is remarkable for its enormous development of productive forces, its economic order imposes other limits on the reach of men's consciousness, on -- specifically -- their capacity to apprehend the "contradictions" and irrationalities of the obtaining social formation. Thus Marx refers throughout his work to the narrow "bourgeois horizon", the "limitations of bourgeois consciousness" (e.g. CI, 14 and 18thB, 11 and 37) and suggests the literal restriction in "brain function" that is here involved (CI, 258). And thus he observes over and over again how even the most outstanding theorists in the capitalist era are unable even to conceive of an end or alternative to the capitalist order: their capacity of "projective consciousness" has for Marx been blocked from operating in the most crucial area of thought of all, consideration of the ubiquitously dehumanizing ruling-class economic system. Indeed it is implicitly Marx's own most important purpose to break past these cognitive barriers -- imposed on the minds of capitalist and working man alike through the influence of the massively ensconced production relations/Economic Structure within which they all live -- through the writing and propogandizing of his new science of society (See Chapter VI, Forms of Social Consciousness).

Marx regards such restrictions by the production relations/Economic Structure on the functionable range of consciousness as present, in one form or another, in all historical societies. In ancient Greek society, for example, he suggests that the obtaining

economic order -- whose major characteristic was master-slave relations -- prevented even a "genius" like Aristotle from comprehending the labour theory of value:

There was however an important fact which prevented Aristotle from seeing that, to attribute value to commodities, is merely a mode of expressing all labour as equal human labour, and consequently as labour of equal quality. Greek society was founded upon slavery and had, therefore, for its natural basis, the inequality of man and of their labour-powers. The secret of the expression of value...cannot be deciphered until the notion of human equality has already acquired the fixity of a popular prejudice. This, however, is possible only in a society in which the great mass of the produce of labour takes the form of commodities, in which, consequently, the dominant relation between man and man is that of owners of commodities. The brilliancy of Aristotle's genius is shown by this alone, that he discovered, in the expression of the value of commodities, a relation of equality. The peculiar conditions of the society in which he lived alone prevented him from discovering what, "in truth" was at the bottom of this equality. (CI, 59-60)

However, it is important to point out here that Marx regards this so to say mind-fencing effect of the production relations/Economic Structure on the consciousness of men in a particular historical epoch as defeasible given sufficient development of the productive forces. Thus in capitalist society, once the productive forces have "outgrown" their economic form, a scientific and revolutionary theory of society (e.g. Marx's) is capable of conception. In other words, though the production relations/Economic Structure imposes certain limits on the "functionable range" of human consciousness in any historical era, these limits are eventually subvertible by the more primary influence of the forces of production (see Chapter VIII, Technological Determinism).

Now in this whole process of various barriers being imposed

on and removed from men's inherent powers of consciousness by the influence of productive forces and relations lies part of the substance of Marx's famous remark that men's "social existence determines their consciousness". That is, the "functionable range" of consciousness is in all historical societies constrained within some bounds (and in this sense "determined") by virtue of the technical and economic conditions within which they live. The latter provide the literal frames of reference to which men's mental powers are more or less confined. The cognitive barriers involved here remain, however, quite consistent with the human mind's raising, and execution of, creative projects: such barriers simply restrain projective consciousness within certain limitations of range, as opposed to prescribing its operations.

Having furnished an outline of how Marx mainly construes the essential capacity of human nature -- "projective consciousness" -- undergoing historical modification, we might want to consider how he construes the "bodily instruments" themselves -- the limbs, organs and senses -- undergoing such modification. But Marx almost never gets into a discussion of this sort. About all he says in this respect is in the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts (108-9). Here he talks about a human "sense" being in certain material conditions "a restricted (or "caught up") sense", and we can see here the clear homologue to his idea of consciousness being "restrained within a compass". In both cases there seems to be this principle of what I have called a "functionable range" to natural



capacity, whose ambit defines the latter's main form of historical modification. However though I think this line of thought might be pursued fruitfully with respect to the historical modification of the so-called "bodily instruments" -- the senses and the limbs (if not the organs) increasing like projective consciousness their functionable range with the development of the productive forces and so forth -- to do so would be needlessly inventive. Instead let me resummamrize the schema with which Marx seems to work in describing the historical modification of the general human-natural capacity for projective consciousness and leave open the question as to whether or not he would want to subsume the modification of all human-natural capacities under the same set of principles (though, I must add, suggesting all the while the probability and fertility of just such an integration):

- 1) The natural capacity x is common to the members of all historical societies (i.e. potential).
- 2) This natural capacity x is confined within a certain "functionable range" through the influence of technical and economic conditions (i.e. blocked potential or retardation).
- 3) This natural capacity x is in some way or to some extent released from its former "functionable range" through the influence of technical and economic conditions (released potential or readiness).
- 4) This capacity x, now freed in the above respect, may manifest itself in some new, definite competence (i.e. as determinate



historical skill, to be distinguished from mere potential or capacity).

(1), (2) and (3) refer to the domain of human nature itself; while (4), of course, is outside this domain as, say, a definite labour-power ability (i.e. part of the productive forces). As far as the "historical modification" of human nature goes, it is construed in terms of (2) and (3): with (1) belonging to the sphere of human nature "in general". Principles (2) and (3), in short, provide the logic of the historical modification of the capacities of human nature so far as Marx describes this phenomenon.

Most of Marx's discussion of man's nature as "historically modified", however, does not focus on man's capacities at all. Much the greater part of his attention is directed towards the historicization of man's needs. Here as well, his remarks are cursory and scattered, but a similar general pattern emerges: namely, that the scope of needs -- parallelling the "functionable range" of capacities -- expands with the development of the forces of production. As Marx says:

The scope [Umfang] of man's so-called necessary needs, as also the mode of satisfying them, is itself the product of historical development and depends therefore to a great extent on the degree of civilization of a country...". (CI, 171)<sup>7</sup>

In this passage from Capital, Marx alludes to the "degree of

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<sup>7</sup>I have changed the English translation of Umfang here from "number and extent" in the standard translation to the more accurate "scope" (i.e. range).

civilization of a country" as the factor upon which the extending compass of needs depends. Elsewhere he is more explicit:

Needs, poor in the original, only develop with the productive forces. (GID, 39)

How Marx sees men's needs as amplifying their scope with the development of the productive forces is as follows. The specific objects of such needs extend their range in accordance with the growth of the production system that supplies them:

The object of a need is not an object in general, but a specific object...whose specificity is imposed by production itself.  
(G, 92)

Marx proffers an example here. The need for food is, in general, always a need for food ("Hunger is hunger"); but its specific object broadens its scope (though not necessarily its absolute amount) from the very simple diet of the "savage" to the much more extensive fare of the modern European, pari passu with the development of the productive forces of the society in question. That is, historical modification of the need for food is in terms of its determinate need-object, extending its range as the productive forces become more and more fecund in their material yield. It is essentially in this sense for Marx that "production establishes the need of the consumer", not only in the case of the need for food but -- where appropriate all other needs as well (with some human needs in the Marxian schema of course -- for example, the need for clean air -- the notion of increasing scope of need-object would not seem apposite). In other words, men's constitutional needs and men's

productive forces are for the most part in a dialectical relationship with one another. Needs incite production: "No production without a need" (G, 92). But production, in turn, establishes for need its determinate object, in the direction of a progressively wider compass as a society's technology historically advances. In this way for Marx the need aspect of human nature is "historically modified", while itself impelling that which modifies it.

Given this general schema of historical modification of human natural needs -- which is significantly analogous in principle to Marx's concept of the historical modification of human natural capacities -- we are now in a position to make some further, more specific points with respect to Marx's idea of need historicization. Thus in the following remarks I shall very briefly consider Marx's explicit or implied stance on such questions as standards of living and needs versus wants in man's sociohistorical development:

1) Marx emphasizes the social dimension of need-object determination. It is not merely the case that need-objects increase their scope in step with the productive forces that make them, but that at the same time these need-objects (though not, of course, need-gratifications) distributively comply with a certain social standard. For example, Marx says, a person will feel "uncomfortable, dissatisfied and cramped" in a home which is "relatively small" compared to the homes in the surrounding society, even though the home in question might be adequate in other respects. (WLC, 56 ff)

2) Marx occasionally remarks that the quality of need-objects and

the modes of consumption of such needs also modify with the development of the productive forces. Hence with the need-for-food example cited earlier, Marx not only alludes to the modification in scope of the object of this need, but he notes also the change(s) in quality of this need-object (e.g. from "raw" to "prepared" meat) as well as the change in mode of satisfaction (e.g. from "torn apart with the bare fingers" to "eaten with the aid of a fork and knife"). These other dimensions of historical modification of men's needs would seem from Marx's gist here and elsewhere to obtain in all cases where modification of range or scope of need-object obtains; so we might properly admit into Marx's notion of this sort of historicization two further general facets of change -- namely, change with respect to quality of need-object and change with respect to mode of need satisfaction. But there is very little in Marx's writings to go on here. Typically, his concept of human nature in this area never advances beyond suggestive probe.

3) Though Marx does not directly give any criteria whereby historically modified needs can be distinguished from the "depraved fancies", "morbid appetites" etc. that spring up most of all with capitalist production -- that is, more generally put, criteria whereby needs can be distinguished from wants -- his writings would seem clearly to yield these two simple principles of distinction:

- a) The "object" of a need is, or is useful for producing, one or other of the need "objects" catalogued earlier (i.e. food, habitation, clothing, clean air and surroundings etc.);



whereas the object of a want (e.g. "lust for capital", "caprice of fashion" etc.) is not.

b) A need cannot require what is in excess of the established social standard (i.e. "luxury"); whereas a want can.

4) The historically modifying influence of production relations/Economic Structure on men's needs has not been treated above because Marx himself seems to regard any impact it has on human motivation to be a matter of stirring mere wants -- "depraved fancies", "caprices", "morbid appetites" etc. -- and not needs in his sense at all. Hence in the case of capitalist production relations/Economic Structure, its major impact on human motivation is with respect to encouraging an "unnatural greed" for capital, which greed is polemically heralded by Marx over and over again from his earliest to his latest works. In no case that I can think of -- whether he is talking of dominating this "lust for capital" or the more minor swarm of "inhuman, refined, unnatural and imaginary appetites" (EPM, 116) which accompany the former -- does Marx construe the production relations/Economic Structure as influencing need as he conceived it. It is always, it seems, in terms of non-need cravings of some sort that he talks of such influence. Though one may be tempted here to try to fit Marx's schema of historical modification of human-natural capacity onto this influence by the production relations/Economic Structure on human natural need -- that is, construe motivation by mere wants as constituting historically modifying blocks to men's motivation by intrinsic needs; blocks that

are analogous in principle to those retarding limits placed on the functionable range of man's capacities -- such a "fit" into ready schema may only properly attain the status of suggestion, not claim. I think the fit works and is theoretically integrating, but there is little or no explicit evidence from Marx to support it.

5) As needs are historically modified in the direction of <sup>i</sup>ncreased scope, they demand more production of a stipulated sort (e.g. man's need for food requires progressively more food production as it develops through the ancient, feudal and capitalist eras). Hence in this sense, the historicization of needs intensifies the history-old conflict between the "mundane" needs of man's nature and the "essential" need for material self-realization; that is, inasmuch as more production of a prescribed sort is enjoined by the expansion of "mundane" needs, just so far as man's "essential" need to work constrained to fulfill itself in a stipulated or unfree way. (E.g. man must work at food-production and not some other thing of his own choosing). Thus Marx says:

With civilized man's development this realm of physical necessity expands as a result of his wants [read "needs"].

But, Marx immediately adds,

at the same time, the forces of production which satisfy these wants [read "needs"] also increase (CIII, 820).

So even though the "realm of necessity expands" with the historicization of needs, the forces of production also "expand" and thereby one of the fundamental contradictions of human history for Marx -- between the demands of material survival and the need for free

self-realization -- is continuously meliorated by technological advance (if also, less so, promoted by it).

Progressively, Marx believes, the forces of production -- with an increasingly automated content and planned utilization -- will reduce the necessary working day and, pari passu, yield a "Realm of Freedom" (CIII, 820) where "human energy becomes an end-in-itself". This "Realm of freedom" is beyond "the realm of necessity", beyond the dictate of "mundane" needs altogether. Because it allows completely free reign to man's need to work, "it is worthy of human nature". Man only achieves his fully human status for Marx, then, to the extent that the requirements of his historicized needs (that is, his non-essence needs) cease to command and instrumentalize his work. For him, all such needs are to be materially "conquered", to be divested of their imperiousness by the growth of technology. Change in material circumstances, thus, truly gives rise to a new man who (in Hegelian phrase) "contains within his present all the moments of his past", who remains with all his historically amplified needs while at the same time transcending them in liberated activity by virtue of automated, communist forces of production which provide his material base, his platform of subjecthood.

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It is clear from all that has been said above that the widely held view that the mature work of Marx altogether lacks a position on the nature of man is radically mistaken. Accordingly,

difficulties which are said to follow from this putative "blank" in his theoretical framework do not in fact obtain.

First of all, the "productive forces" obviously do own an explanatory base in Marx's schema. He sees them as motivated by needs and enabled by capacities which are inherent in human nature: especially, the essential human need and capacity to raise a project in the imagination and execute it in reality. As well, obviously, there is no question of Marx's having to account for human motivation and enablement in wholly social-conditioning terms. Then, again, the problem of Marx's communist vision operating only in terms of technological imperative -- what I called "robot" communism -- clearly does not obtain in his writings (though it seems to in the works of his orthodox disciples). Marx patently does have a substantial notion of human nature and while it avoids (i.e. by its emphasis on the bodily and the historical) the mere "abstraction" which he deplored in the concepts of human nature of Feuerbach, Proudhon et al, it also avoids the absurdities and dangers (i.e. man as product) following from a denial of human nature altogether.

Finally, several of the specific and apparently intrinsic human dispositions which Marx is conventionally said to deprive of any place in his theory -- man's creativity, for example -- are explicitly and repeatedly affirmed by him. On the other hand, those he is correctly said to have denied natural status to -- say, man's desire for power or instinct for aggression or power -- he



does so on the grounds of alternative, more parsimonious explanation. That is, he does not as others infer from man's historically persistent power-seeking and aggressive behaviour corresponding peculiar natural drive(s) for such behaviour but -- in perhaps proper recourse to Occam's razor -- regards these sorts of behaviour as explicable in terms (e.g. material scarcity and economic laws) requiring no such multiplication of entities. Whether or not Marx is right in this stance seems still an open question.

Having demonstrated that the category of "human nature" does indeed have considerable -- if hitherto unnoted -- significance in the structure of Marx's mature world-view, we may now reiterate with slight addition our revision of the outline of this structure:

- 1) Human Nature - "in general"  
- "as modified in each historical epoch"
- 2) Forces of Production
- 3) Relations of Production (or Economic Structure)
- 4) Legal and Political Superstructures
- 5) Ideological Forms
- 6) Forms of Social Consciousness.

A final word here. Marx's view of human nature may give the clue both to his persistent normative remarks in a putatively positivist corpus and to the moral indignation he -- an apparent despiser of all moral positioning -- continually evinces. The entire normative and moral content of Marx's work (and despite the objections of his orthodox apologists, there is such content in abundance) is I think based on a first, major ethical premise,

which is roughly this: men ought to reproduce and express themselves as fully as possible. Given that Marx sees the nature of men as constituted of the many historicized capacities and needs we have outlined, this basic moral premise -- which would seem to place Marx in what we today call the "ethical naturalist" school -- means that anything which promotes or interferes with the satisfaction and realization of such needs and capacities represents to him good or evil respectively. Hence whenever Marx approves, blames, ascribes duties or even talks of the "necessity" of revolution, at the bottom of his remarks there stands this foundational ethical imperative and the generally ignored concept of human nature which gives it flesh.

## CHAPTER II

### FORCES OF PRODUCTION

As I have already suggested, the forces of production are motivated and enabled by, respectively, the needs and capacities of human nature. Their function of embodying or yielding use-value presupposes human need, both as inciter and beneficiary. And their intelligent construction presupposes human capacity, both mental and physical. They are in these ways for Marx the objectifications of human nature. They are related to the latter, in traditional phrase, as realization to potential.

Marx never directly defines a "force of production" and he uses a number of terms like "conditions of production", "instruments of production" and "means of production" which make it difficult to know whether he intended the formulation in question as a covering term or as one more restricted in meaning (e.g. just labour-power and tools). I will assume -- there being no persuasive textual evidence to the contrary -- that he intends it as a covering term.

Considering all that Marx says on forces of production, and construing the term in its covering sense, an adequate definition would -- to come straight to the point -- be the following: a force

of production is anything which is/can be used to make a material use-value (see CI, 177 ff). Obvious candidates for forces of production are, hence, tools (from hand-implements to machines), human labour-power (from manual to scientific), and natural resources (from coal deposits to fish). However, a more systematic and detailed account is required here, which I shall give presently. Before doing so, it is important to explain the force of my "is/can be used" predication in the above definition. The reason I employ the double auxiliary "is/can" here is to ensure that the definition picks up not only any force of production which is in fact used to make material use-value, but any force which can in fact be so used but is not on sheerly non-technological account: that is, those forces of production -- for example, unemployed labour-power and unused factory capacities -- which for Marx are impeded from present utilization merely by economic obstacles (e.g. in capitalism, insufficient effective demand or profit opportunity). These latter forces of production are for Marx no less valid as such because of extrinsic impediment. They thoroughly qualify as forces of production inasmuch as their immediate utilization for the making of material use-value is frustrated solely by non-technical barriers raised by the relations of production/Economic Structure: so, that they are not so used but are (to use Marx's phraseology) "wasted", "destroyed", "suppressed" by virtue of economic "fetters" does not one whit detract for him from their status as forces of production. Furthermore, because the ground and index of all social



revolutionary possibility is in Marx's schema the emergence and growth of just these forces of production which can be used to make material use-value but are not entirely on account of non-technological impediments, it is especially important to include such forces in any delineation of his general concept that pretends to interpretative adequacy. In short, the "is/can" wording of our definition of the forces of production is not only amply justified but required by Marx's emphasis on usable but unused technical powers in his analysis of social production, particularly the latter as it is "fettered" in the mature, pre-revolutionary period of an historical epoch.

Another point that should be made about the definition of forces of production which I have sponsored above is that it meets certain objections raised against Marx's schema by effectively ruling out all human natural, economic, superstructural or ideological phenomena from its domain of reference. That is, a natural capacity or need (as opposed to a definite productive capability), an ownership relation (as opposed to a technological relation), a superstructural law (as opposed to a physical law), an ideological formulation (as opposed to a practical-science formulation) -- of none of these may it properly be said that it "is/can be used to make a material use-value". None can qualify, therefore, as a productive force. One or other may indeed by necessary conditions of some sort for forces of production to arise (i.e. natural capacity and need) or -- with the rest -- to be appropriated, exchanged,

socially apportioned, justified or in some way appropriately contextualized; and one or other may be used to make something of some sort. But none is or can actually be used to make a material use-value. In this way, then, the definition above successfully secures the required conceptual discreteness of Marx's forces of production category; and in so doing answers those critics who have claimed an inherent amorphousness to the category in question.

Marx's general concept of productive forces now more or less clear, we may proceed to specific elaboration.

There are for Marx two basic classes of productive force:

- 1 labour-power (Arbeitskraft)
- 2 means of production (Produktionsmittel)

(1) constitutes the "subjective factor" of production and (2) constitutes the "objective factor". (2), it should be noted, is often further distinguished into natural and man-made means of production, with these latter sometimes being further subdivided into "general conditions" of production (transportation and communication systems)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>These "general conditions" of production -- transportation and communication systems -- may at first seem to fail to meet our definition of productive forces as "anything which is/can be used to make a material use-value". But Marx regarded changing the place of something as changing its material use-value:

here a material change is effected in the object of labour -- a spatial change, a change of place --. Its spatial existence is altered and along with this goes a change in its use-value, since the location of this use-value is changed (S-VI, 399). Since to change something from use-value A to use-value B is clearly, to be used to make use-value B, transportation and communication systems do not in fact prove refractory to our definition.

as opposed to "instruments" of production (tools and machines).

But in general terms Produktionsmittel is the covering category for all non-human productive forces, whereas Arbeitskraft is the category for all human productive forces. In both cases, the force in question is something which is/can be used to make a material use-value or product -- whether it be a human skill, on the one hand, or a natural resource, a public utility or a technological instrument on the other (see CI, 177 ff and 384).

Of these various sorts of productive force, the primary -- because presupposed by and far the most part, immanent in the other forms of productive force -- is labour-power. Marx, defines labour-power in Capital as:

the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities [Fähigkeiten] existing in a human being, which he exercises whenever he produces a use-value of any description. (CI, 167)

There are several points which should be made clear about this characterization of labour-power:

1 "Capabilities" of labour-power are to be distinguished from "capacities" of human nature. The difference between these two is that a "capability" is the ability to perform a specific work task whereas a capacity is not: the former are indeed only possible because of the prior existence of the latter (for example, the technical capability of designing bridges presupposes the prior existence of the natural capacity to think), but are distinct from them inasmuch as a capacity requires some sort of training or education before it has developed into a well-formed skill. There may



be cases where natural capacity is at the same time a technically usable competence -- for example, man's natural capacity to move in certain ways may be at the same time the technical competence to, say, beach-comb -- but such cases are merely borderline.

2 Marx's use of the adjective phrase "mental and physical" before "capabilities", should not mislead us into supposing that he conceives of mental and physical capabilities as different types of competence. On the contrary, there can be for Marx no purely physical labour-power abilities inasmuch as the latter always involve (technically) rule-governed activities i.e. activities requiring some form of mental mediation; and there can be no purely mental labour-power competence inasmuch as the latter must terminate in some physical performance if they are to be usable in material production. In other words, the "mental and physical capabilities" of labour-power are for Marx something like forms of know-how, involving both mental and physical content in any given case.

3 The formal content of such labour-power "know-how" is practical scientific knowledge which latter is, for this reason, referred to by Marx as the "most solid form of human wealth" (G, 540). This point deserves special emphasis inasmuch as it demonstrates that Marx did not -- contrary to wide interpretation -- place technological science in the sphere of "ideology", but seated it rather at the very core of the productive forces. Unlike the ideas of philosophy, religion, politics and so on -- which are, of course, ideological for Marx -- the ideas of practical science very much are/can be used



to make material use-values: indeed such science for him is, in one form or another, the force of production par excellence in all eras, especially the capitalist. And because of its cardinal status as a force of production in all eras, its effective ownership -- by Egyptian priesthood, or modern business -- provides economic-power leverage of the very first order: a fact that Marx emphasizes over and over again in his work (e.g. CI, 509 and 514).

4 There are two different types of human labour-power -- unskilled and skilled. Unskilled labour-power is labour-power which "apart from any special development exists in the organism of every ordinary individual" of a society (CI, 44). Exactly what set of capabilities is involved in such unskilled labour-power depends on the society in question and its level of civilization; but "in a particular society it is given". (Such a set of capabilities would presumably be the abilities to perform a standard range of technically useful operations considered "normal" to the society in question -- for example, in present society, knowing how to read, write, use everyday tools, etc.). On the other hand, skilled labour-power is "multiplied" unskilled labour-power: that is, labour power which involves more intensive work capabilities than the social standard, "a given quantity of skilled being equal to a greater quantity of simple labour".<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Marx's contention that skilled labour-power can properly be calculated as a multiple of unskilled labour-power is, I believe, not only subject to knotty mathematical difficulties with respect to identifying a common unit of quantification, but -- on the social side -- gives rise to problems of distributive inequity in cont'd

5 Labour-power which "produces a use-value of any description" includes not only labour-power which directly produces use-value, but labour-power which indirectly produces use-value: that is, labour-power which is required to produce, train, develop, maintain or reproduce directly productive labour-power itself. Thus Marx says:

Productive labour would therefore be such labour as produces commodities or directly produces, trains, develops, maintains or reproduces labour-power itself (CI, 44)

Such "indirectly" productive labour-power -- which is no less productive for its being indirectly so: it still "is/can be used to make a material use-value" -- would, it seems clear, include medical and educational labour-power. Just as labour-power which services or adapts machines must be counted as productive, so with Marx labour-power which maintains (medical) and develops/trains (educational) human labour-power must count as productive. Indeed Marx's language in the above passage would seem to permit -- among other things -- child-bearing capabilities to count as productive inasmuch as they too are necessary to "produce" and "reproduce" labour-power.

It is important here to appreciate fully this embracing referential range of Marx's concept of productive labour-power: not only to achieve more adequate understanding of the concept in question,

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the "transitional stage" of socialism where each is paid "according to his work" (i.e. a skilled worker is paid x-times more than an unskilled worker): a distributive inequity which has been notoriously exemplified in modern "Marxist" societies.

but -- of both systemic and contemporary relevance -- to yield the conceptual underpinning for possible Marxian explanations of such currently familiar phenomena of school/university upheavals (an instance of the forces of production -- educational labour-power and its "natural resource" student material -- "bursting" the relations of production?<sup>3</sup>), health big-business (doctors' monopoly ownership of medical labour-power and special facilities as qualification for ruling-class status?), women's liberation (another instance of the forces of production -- here "reproductive" labour-power -- "bursting" relations of production "fetters"?), etc.

6 Means of subsistence for labour-power are forces of production in the same way as fuel and storage facilities for machinery are forces of production (To use the language of the immediately preceding point, they are "indirectly" productive). But, as we have earlier suggested, such means of subsistence for labour-power undergo historical development; or, otherwise put, the needs of labour-power which they meet undergo historical development. Hence insofar as the means of subsistence for labour-power forces of production grow with "the degree of civilization of a country" (CI, 171), it is possible -- contrary to popular criticisms of Marx -- for labour-power to suffer "immiserization" even as its absolute consumption of means of subsistence increases. (CI, 645)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>See my "Student Revolt: Marxism in a New Dimension", Commentator, Vol. 13, No. 11 (November 1969) pp. 17-23.

<sup>4</sup>It has, of course, been a favorite claim of critics cont'd

Having elaborated Marx's concept of labour-power -- the historical articulation of the human-natural essence man's capacity for projective consciousness -- we may briefly consider the "objective factor" of production -- namely, the man-made and natural means of production. As has already been indicated the former are of two main types -- "general conditions" of production (i.e. transportation and communication systems) and "instruments" of production (i.e. tools, including machines). With the latter, natural means of production -- or, in current terminology "natural resources" -- Marx proffers no such division into type. But of both these main sorts of "objective" productive force the following principles are of general significance:

1 Both are seen by Marx as in some sense external organs of man.

Thus of natural resources, indeed of the whole of Nature, Marx says:

Thus Nature becomes one of the organs of man's activity, one that he annexes to his own bodily organs, adding stature to himself in spite of the bible (CI, 179).

And thus of the man-made instruments of production -- tools in the

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of Marx that his theory is obviously mistaken because his repeated prediction of worker immiserization has not in fact taken place: a claim that has usually drawn for its only support upon the rising real wages of workers since Marx's original projection. Such a rebuttal, typically of the critical literature on Marx, misses his point entirely. He emphasizes that whether the worker's "payment be high or low", his "lot must grow worse" (CI, 645) not just because his means of subsistence fail to keep pace with historical development, but -- more fundamentally -- because the capitalist class owns a greater and greater share of the total material resources of society (i.e. by accumulation) and thus, the working class relatively less and less.



broadest sense -- Marx invokes much the same picture:

Darwin has interested us in the history of Nature's Technology i.e. in the formation of the organs of plants and animals, which organs serve as instruments of production for sustaining life. Does not the history of the productive organs of man, of organs that are the material basis of all social organization, deserve equal attention? (CI, 372)

Elsewhere Marx talks of these forces of production as the "objective body of man's subjectivity" (Pre-C, 69), as "a prolongation of his body" (Pre-C, 89) and so on -- persistently identifying natural and constructed forces of production as organic extensions of man, of human subjecthood. From this principle of characterization a number of things seem to follow:

i Since labour-power is for Marx the explicit content of man's subjecthood, the relationship between man and his "external organs" of tools and natural resources is at the same time -- on an explicit level -- the relationship between labour-power and such "external organs". Hence in the general connection of man to his means of production, we can discern at the same time the more specific technological connection of the "subjective factor" (labour-power) to the "objective factor" (tools and natural resources) of production. The latter connection is to a large extent the former connection merely cast in more determinate terms; which not only helps to illuminate the nature of this latter connection for Marx, but indicates how and why he often tends to construe man's relationship with his "objective" world in terms of productive forces alone (i.e. with no mention of human nature).

ii Inasmuch as Marx construes the objective means of production of a society as the "external organs" of man, private property appropriation of these means of production would seem for him to be, correspondingly, the dismemberment of those whose "external organs" are thus removed by such exclusive appropriation: a kind of ongoing legitimized mutilation of men's objective lives. In this tearing asunder of the social body which private property seems to imply lies perhaps the ultimate ground of Marx's concern to eradicate the capitalist order.

iii Insofar as Nature is an "organ" of man, it possesses no independent value and is wholly human instrumentality. Marx's position seems thereby ultimately one of absolute anthropocentrism, with the totality of non-human life and matter on earth apparently confined to the status of real or potential human adjunct (this point shall earn critical attention in Book 2 of my essay).

2 Forces of production -- "objective" and "subjective" -- are "accumulated" throughout history -- each generation retaining and building upon the productive achievements of the last (PofP, 156). No principle is more emphatically and repeatedly treated by Marx: one might even claim that in this principle lies the nub of his "historical materialist" doctrine (as the phrase itself suggests). Because the productive forces are so accumulated from one generation to the next, a number of very important things follow for him:

i history exhibits progress of a technological sort and, from this, other sorts of progress too (hence arises what has been called Marx's

"illusion (sic) of progress").

ii men "are not free to choose their productive forces" (PofP, 156) because each of them is always born into, and depends for his survival on, a technology that is already more or less formed (hence arises what has been called Marx's "denial (sic) of free will").

iii the present, in the above sense at least, always contains (in Hegelian phrase) the "moments of its past" and can only be fully understood in terms of this past (the substance of the idea which has been pejoratively dubbed "historicism").

iv men must or "are obliged to" (PofP, 157) preserve their forces of production -- "the gift of thousands of centuries" -- "in order that they may not be deprived of the result attained and forfeit the fruits of civilization", (the law-like ground of Marx's belief in an "inevitable revolution" against the counter-productive structure of mature capitalist society).

Before concluding this exposition of Marx's concept of the forces of production, it is important to note that though these forces must be conceived as distinct from, and the material base of, the relations of production/Economic Structure -- together with which such forces form the overall "mode of production" -- they are by no means unaffected by the latter. Not only do the relations of production/Economic Structure dialectically relate with the productive forces as both "stimulus" (e.g. the profit-seeking "law of motion" of capital motivates ever more production) and "fetter" (e.g. the feudal relations of production bind production within "fixed,



fast-frozen" limits), but they importantly distort the forces of production both in intrinsic function and mode of operation (rendering them, as it were, "destructive forces" GID, 76). That is:

1 they -- with "human nature" itself -- stipulate the material use-values which it is the function of the productive forces to make (e.g. in capitalism, only those use-values which sustain or increase profit for the capitalists: for instance, cosmetics and weapons).

2 they -- along with, and overlaying, purely technological requirements -- stipulate the mode of operation of the productive forces (e.g. in capitalism, only such mode of operation which, again, sustains or increases profit for the capitalists: for instance "riveted" division of labour and resource-exhaustion).

Now the distortion-effects on the intrinsic function and mode of operation of productive forces which such requirements of the relations of production/Economic Structure give rise to are frequently and passionately observed by Marx -- though the full implications of such distortions seem not altogether appreciated by him. (That the productive forces could become so deformed in these aspects that they are no longer capable of providing the material grounds of and propulsion towards a revolutionary communist society (as opposed to mere centralization of control) never seems to seriously occur to him<sup>5</sup>). In any case, of the distortion by economic influences of

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<sup>5</sup>Though I shall not pursue this point any further in this essay, I must record my suspicion that it is a point which may well undermine Marx's entire systematic projection of the progressive cont'd



the use-values occurring from the productive forces, Marx has this to say:

- a) their content is trivialized (e.g. "the munderous, meaningless caprices of fashion" (CI, 494) or in some other way "depraved".
- b) their quality is debased (e.g. adulterated foodstuffs, inferior dwellings and clothing articles, unsafe factories, etc.).

On the other hand, of the distortions by economic influences the mode of operation of the productive forces, Marx has this to say:

- a) They are destructive of labour-power ("murdering", "exhausting", "riveting", "brutalizing" and otherwise detracting from its productive potential).
- b) They are destructive of natural resources ("sapping", "despoiling", "polluting" and otherwise wrecking the very elements themselves (e.g. "the soil" CI, 507).
- c) They are inefficiently utilized (social coordination of productive forces is "anarchic", labour-power is squandered in "hordes of unproductive workers" (S-VI, passim), and outright unemployment of both "subjective" and "objective" factors of production is continuous and, periodically, critical).

The importance of these several distortions of the productive

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course of human history. When one considers the increasing tendency of capitalist productive forces to produce the "use-values" of human killing-machinery and status commodities, and to apply the methods of resource exhaustion/pollution, exclusive detail-task, administrative policing -- it is not easy to see how such a permeatively distorted productive system is capable of "bursting" anything but our hearts.

forces by the influence of the production relations/Economic Structure deserves further emphasis here insofar as it indicates how Marx's concept of forces of production, or technology, is able to avoid a crucially significant error of modern social philosophy. The error in question is this: that technology (in Marx's language, "the forces of production") is inherently deleterious with respect to, among other things, uncontrolled growth, person-imprisoning division of labour, and the necessity of hierarchy. To take these in turn, it is quite clear that with Marx "Technology" is in itself responsible for none of these problems:

a) Uncontrolled growth is a function of the "laws of motion" of capital which systematically enjoin its own self-amplification (i.e. "profit") without cessation. It is this economic -- not technological -- imperative which drives technology in the direction of "uncontrolled growth".

b) Person-imprisoning division of labour is a function of the relations of production/Economic Structure which requires the technologically unnecessary exclusive confinement of individuals to production places (e.g. the technological necessity to position labour-power  $x$  in place  $y$  for  $t_1 \dots t_n$  -- which could be fulfilled in any number of other ways (e.g. taking turns) -- is economically constrained to be in fact the riveting of just this person to just this job for all of  $t_1 \dots t_n$ )

c) The necessity of hierarchy is non-technological insofar as of no component of hierarchy can it properly be said that it "is/can

be used to make a material use-value" (i.e. that it is productively necessary)<sup>6</sup>. On the other hand, there is a "necessity of hierarchy" insofar as the practical protection of economic class-power arrangements is to be successfully secured and maintained.

Other putatively "inherently deleterious" features of "technology" as such -- for example, trivialized and debased use-values and destructive modes of operation -- have already been shown to be economically rather than technologically effected in the Marxian schema. Such a discrimination between the etiological domains of these two factors is, I repeat, of importance not only for understanding Marx's concept of productive forces, but for discerning the mistake in an increasingly influential tradition in social philosophy which presumes or declares the intrinsic defects of "technology" as such (a tradition which Marx himself confronted and criticized in various forms -- Carlyle, Proudhon, Guild Socialism etc. -- in his own day).

Despite this restriction on the (negative, at least) influence of the forces of production, Marx on the whole -- and here I conclude my sketch of this fundamental category of his general

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<sup>6</sup>Otherwise put, no technological requirement -- including productive-force coordination -- implies a ranking or grading of the producers into levels of command (i.e. hierarchialization). Though it is a common mistake to assume, for example, that "managers" are a technological necessity for all modern forms of production, what is a technological necessity is not "managers" at all, but such-and-such coordination of productive forces: which coordination could be achieved (has to be achieved, I think Marx holds) by worker self-government.



theoretical framework -- grants sovereign status to such forces in his world-view. For him, the productive forces are in the end the foundations of human existence and expression:

As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce. (GID, 32)

They raise men above the animals and objectify his potentia. They answer to and shape the objects of human needs, and they actualize and extend human capacities. They are the basic medium of human activity, and they determine the routines of work and the context of behaviour generally. They set limits to, and ultimately subvert, production relations and the economic order. They, through the latter, condition the legal and political superstructure and inform ideology with their content. They provide the praxis foundations of human knowledge. They progressively conquer the fundamental limitation of nature and historical life, scarcity, and correspondingly liberate man from the necessity of conflict and the struggle for "survival". They inexorably release society from the necessity of labour and so lift "the curse of Adam" from the shoulders of mankind. They constitute for Marx, in brief, the basic substance of human history -- generating truly a cumulative Second Creation, a new cosmic order. Technology is, as it were, the Marxian Providence.

But to show precisely how the forces of production relate to the other factors of Marx's model, I reserve a later section, Technological Determinism.



### CHAPTER III

#### RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION/ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

Relations of production, as a totality, constitute the Economic Structure: which latter Marx refers to in varying contexts as the "essence", the "form" and the "base" (or "hidden basis") of all historical human society. Although this relations of production/Economic Structure category seems thus the theoretical linchpin of all Marx's analysis, its precise meaning has been a matter of continuing and unresolved controversy for almost a century. Marx himself, as with every one of the basic categories of his Weltanschauung, never proffers a precise definition. Furthermore, it is difficult to elicit one from his work inasmuch as his usage is so rich and elliptical at the same time. Despite these difficulties, however, I think a philosophically satisfactory characterization can be secured: though one must venture so to speak beneath Marx's texts to achieve it. Again then, underlying principles are our quarry.

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The first thing which must be made clear in explicating Marx's concept of production relations/Economic Structure is that he does not mean -- contrary to some interpretations -- to refer to the technological relations connecting various human and non-human

forces of production to one another. It is worth illustrating this point with an example. In a modern factory, technological relations are those relations which must obtain between the various instruments and labour-powers in order to set these forces into some sort of productive coherence: such relations are as integral to this (or any other) productive mechanism as, in the microcosm, linking and organizing mechanical parts are to a machine. Technological relations are, in other words, wholly within the sphere of productive forces and are stipulated by them.

Relations of production, on the other hand, are extra-technical relations akin to property relations: "property relations" being for Marx, as he says in the Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy and elsewhere, just "a legal expression" for relations of production. (They are relations of production, of course, because the ownership they denote is ownership of productive forces.) Thus whereas technological relations are the operating connections implicit in the productive forces, relations of production are the proprietary connections between these productive forces and their owners.<sup>1</sup>

The apparent difficulty with so distinguishing relations of production from technological relations is that the former seem

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<sup>1</sup>It is worth remarking here that technological relations never involve persons as such, but only labour-powers: thus the same technological relations would obtain on an assembly-line whether the labour-power places were filled by one set of individuals or by n sets of individuals acting in turns.

thereby to be pushed into the domain of the superstructure. That is, we are now confronted with the new problem of distinguishing relations of production from property relations which are part of the legal superstructure.

To advance straight to the point, the saving distinction here lies in the difference between power and right.<sup>2</sup> A relation of production is a relation of a person to a force of production such that he has the power to use or exploit it and exclude others from doing so.<sup>3</sup> A cognate property relation, in contrast, is a relation of a person to a force of production such that he has the right to use or exploit it and exclude others from doing so. Now though the power and the right to so employ a force of production often and even generally coincide, very frequently they do not. The army commander, the criminal chieftain, the upper bureaucrat, the religious leader, the political strongman, the monopolist, the party machine and so on may all own the power to use or exploit forces of production and exclude others from doing so, with no corresponding right. On the other hand, the penniless, the conquered and intimidated, the legislatively deceived, and so on may all have the right to use or exploit forces of production and exclude others from

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<sup>2</sup>For the most extended general discussion by Marx of the power-right distinction, see GID, 357 ff and 394 ff.

<sup>3</sup>The overall definition here of a relation of production, of an "effective ownership" relation, is, by the way, my own. Its construction was the single most difficult task of my essay and has provided, for me, the single most illuminating path of inquiry.

doing so, with no corresponding power.<sup>4</sup> The two are quite distinct. Furthermore, it should be noted, even where legal property relations and relations of production do "coincide", this may well be a matter of right sanctioning power which has been or could be held independently of such sanction (e.g. as enforced custom).<sup>5</sup> This is an important point because it suggests a still more thoroughgoing distinction between property relations and relations of production.

Having secured a definition of relations of production that pries these relations apart from both technological relations (which belong to the forces of production) and cognate property relations (which belong to the legal superstructure), we are in a position to make some rather more specific remarks about production relations as such:

1 Though Marx never explicitly says so, it would seem that a necessary (though not sufficient) material condition of the power to use or exploit forces of production and exclude others from doing so is superior physical force invokable by whoever holds such power: whether it be the armed force of feudal retinue, police or army, hired thugs, or whatever. Thus Marx says:

In actual history, it is notorious that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, briefly force, play the chief part (CI, 714).

Presumably those situations where it is not clearly established who

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<sup>4</sup>See, for example, GID, 79-80.

<sup>5</sup>"Right", claims Marx "is only the recognition of fact" (PofP, 75).



can in fact invoke superior physical violence, who really has the power to exclude others from productive forces, are situations of open conflict of some sort where the historical testing of economic relations takes place (e.g. a robbery attempt, an insurrection or an international war). But the results of such "testing" will still be such that superior physical force -- and not, say, moral or legal status -- will decide who secures effective ownership (e.g. in disputes between ruling-class and working-class "force decides" CI, 235).<sup>6</sup> As in the non-human struggle for survival, availability of ascendent might resolves contrary claims to the means of life. Even where invokability of such force does not seem present as a material condition of economic power to exclude others from productive forces -- for example, with publicly "sanctioned" or "naturally just" or merely accepted relations of production -- Marx is properly concerned to strip away the "mask" of such Schein of non-coercive consent to reveal either the physical force upon which such effective ownership can call, and has called, or the latter's "merely illusory" quality. Hence his disdain for the traditional concepts of social contract, revolution by reason alone and so forth: effective ownership in virtually all historical situations requires for Marx the owner's being able to bring ascendant physical force to bear on the

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<sup>6</sup>Hence Marx also says:

Indeed is it at all surprising that a society founded on the opposition of classes should culminate in brutal contradiction, the shock of body against body, as its final denouncement? (PofP, 152)

situation, usually the organs of violence of the state.

None of the above, though, is meant to suggest that such force is said to be always or even usually visible. On the contrary it is for Marx almost always concealed by superstructural "veil" and may only occasionally need to be openly exerted. Furthermore, none of the above is meant to suggest that invokability of superior physical force is ever claimed by Marx to be a sufficient condition of establishing or maintaining relations of production. In addition to the technical conditions required for such, Marx sees superstructural overlay as always required for ownership relations to persist (see Chapters IV and V).

2 Because relations of production not only involve those members of society who have the power to use or exploit forces of production but those who can be excluded from the same, they are ultimately triadic in structure -- relating men to productive forces by virtue of their power to exclude other men from them. Thus effective ownership by some of forces of production always implies corresponding "alienation" or "estrangement" of all others from the same productive forces.

This point is of great importance inasmuch as, among other things:

i It points up the objective and historically universal nature of "alienation" for Marx: which is not for him (as in contemporary usage) some psychological malaise peculiar to modern man, but rather -- in varying ways -- a material concomitant of all relations of production

in human history.

ii It indicates why Marx saw all private ownership of the forces of production as anti-human: by virtue of every person's or group's private ownership of this sort, every other person or group is by definition cut off from the possibilities of "objective existence" or, otherwise put, from material self-realization through the forces so owned.

iii It allows better sense to be made of Marx's claim about increasing "immiserization" in capitalism: such growing impoverishment not being a matter of decreasing money-earnings at all, but obtaining "whether the worker's payment be high or low" (CI, 645) in simple consequence of more forces of production being privately owned by the ruling-class capitalists. That is, since some ownership always implies others' alienation, some's ownership of more must always imply others' alienation from more, and it is in this sense most of all that Marx's immiserization doctrine remains apt -- contrary to conventional view -- despite worker's rising real wages since the mid-nineteenth century.

iv It abets our understanding of why Marx considered communism the "truly human" social formation: because here there is no private ownership of the forces of production, there is no corresponding alienation from the same. "Personal possessions" may remain, and the society as a whole may retain their power to exclude the bodies of nature, or indeed of other societies, from the forces of production in question; but exclusive productive relations within the society



are dissolved, and communism in these respects genuinely transcends the "estrangement" of all previous history and renders man's social circumstances "worthy of human nature" (CIII, 821).

(It is a mistake to suppose, of course, that Marx considered the end of such alienation and estrangement as the end of man of dialectical tension altogether: non-antagonistic "contradiction" emphatically remains, between -- essentially -- project and matter, rather than material interest versus material interest.)

3 The power to use forces of production and exclude others from doing so is to be distinguished from the power to exploit forces of production and exclude others from doing so in this way. The latter involves the power to gain unearned revenue or the benefits of other men's unpaid labour, whereas the former does not. Such unearned benefits may for Marx take the form of rent-in-kind or corvée labour (feudalism) or money interest, rent or profit (capitalism): or any number of other forms not discussed by him (e.g. remuneration for rank in "publicly owned" corporations). On the other hand, the power merely to use forces of production and exclude others from doing so does not involve the power to secure unearned benefits. In cases of purely "independent" producers, for example, -- like self-employed farmers, artisans etc; -- no unpaid labour can be extracted from other men's labour on productive forces that are independently worked, and so no unearned benefit can be yielded by productive force ownership (unless it be by peculiar exchange). In most or all other cases of men having such power merely to 'use'



forces of production and exclude others from doing so, this "power" turns out in fact to be not really a power at all but the means whereby one is exploited. That is, for example, the worker's ownership or relation of production extends only to his own personal labour-power (and perhaps some petty possessions) which former must be sold to another or others for their profit in advance of his receiving the means to keep it and himself alive. Or, in the case of the serf, his ownership extends only to a personal plot and dwelling, on sufferance, and only to a portion of his own labour-power (e.g. 5 of 7 days): relations of production that presuppose he is exploited by virtue of his in-perpetuity grant by feudal contract of two days free labour (or its equivalent) to his lord every week. In neither case, then, do the relations of production permit the owners in question much more than the "use" of their force(s) of production for subsistence survival, and in neither case can even this "use" be secured without at the same time the sufferance of exploitation.<sup>7</sup> In short, in the difference between the power to exploit and the power to use forces of production and exclude others from doing so lies for Marx the difference between the power of oppressor and

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<sup>7</sup>It is worth noting that this sense of exploitation -- one party extracting unearned benefit from another's labour by virtue of the power of ownership of forces of production -- is "double-barrelled": the power to exploit forces of production being at the same time the power to exploit people. But, just as important, this sense of exploitation seems to be the only sort of social domination Marx ever considered, a severe limitation I shall criticize in Book 2.

oppressed (excepting slavery, where the slave is not an owner of any productive force but is himself owned as one).

4 The relations of production of a society coincide with its division of labour. That is, what force or forces of production a member of society effectively owns in a society coincides with his position in that society's division of labour (division of labour or division of vocation being, of course, distinguished from division of task -- the former implies individuals confined to "an exclusive sphere of activity", whereas the latter does not). If, for example, one owns nothing but one's own labour-power in a capitalist society, then correspondingly: (a) one's job is as a wage-labourer (employed or unemployed) and (b) one's job is of this or that sort according to the sort of labour-power which is owned (e.g. unskilled manual or engineering physics). And if, in the same context, one owns significant forces of production in addition to personal labour-power, then one's position in society's division of labour -- whether in the job-place of a small store manager or the job-place of factory master -- will similarly coincide with the extent and nature of the additional forces of production so owned. This correspondence between the relations of production and the division labour of a society, between its members' ownership places and vocation places is repeatedly if cryptically affirmed by Marx. Thus he says such things as:

"In the real world...the division of labour and all M. Proudhon's other categories are social relations forming in their entirety what is known today as property" (PofP, 160).

It might profitably be added here that division of labour is something like a bridging category between forces of production and relations of production: it mediates between technological relations (whose content is implicit in, but not enjoining of, vocational divisions) and economic relations (with which the division of labour coincides). It is their joint "expression": as so to say the operations of a language are the joint expression of its semantics and syntax.<sup>8</sup>

5 Relations of production are more "real" "basic" or "essential" than legal or political relations insofar as (among other reasons) they involve powers and the latter involve merely rights. As has already been suggested powers and rights may regularly coincide, but often they do not: as, for example, in any state (e.g. capitalist or soviet) where the citizen body hold the right(s) of ownership of some or all forces of production but a small ruling group hold some or all of the power(s) of ownership (i.e. some or all of the powers to use or exploit the forces in question and exclude others from doing so). Because powers always entail material enablement whereas rights do not, the powers of relations of production are in this sense for Marx

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<sup>8</sup>While we have this comparison before us, I might say that Marx's notion of a hidden social "essence" (the economic base) -- which has earned critical notice as the sin of "essentialism" -- is no more metaphysical than the grammarian's "essentialist" belief in an underlying structure governing language. The comparison here also illustrates how it is possible for behaviour to be governed by laws that the behavioural agent does not himself discern -- a claim that has upset many readers of Marx (though not readers of grammar books).



more "real", "basic" or "essential" than the rights of legal and political relations.

6 Relations of production -- like human nature, forces of production and the other general categories of Marx's sociohistorical ontology -- are historically conceived. Thus although all relations of production through successive eras are characterized by the various general properties already outlined, they vary from epoch to epoch inasmuch as:

i the forces of production to which men are so related vary from age to age in content (e.g. artisan workshops historically give way to modern factories) and -- relatedly --

ii the "laws of motion" (i.e. laws of exchange and surplus value extraction) of relations of production vary from age to age (e.g. feudal obligations and rent-in-kind historically give way to cash-payment and money profits):<sup>9</sup>

Now that Marx's concept of relations of production has been clarified and elaborated we may consider these relations in their

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<sup>9</sup>In Capital (CI, 10), Marx refers to the "economic law of motion" rather than, as I have it, "laws of motion". Though (as it shall be the task of the next pages to point out) there is in a sense one covering "law of motion" for all societies in Marx's schema -- namely, every exchange between ruling-class (e.g. capitalists) and producing class (e.g. proletarians) in any Economic Structure yields surplus-value to the ruling-class -- there are also for Marx, many complementary specific economic laws (e.g. regarding rate of surplus-value) which has led me to talk of "laws of motion", to render this term in the plural. (Should the Newtonian nomenclature here dismay the reader by its implicit conflation of natural and social science models, the less provocative "economic laws" may be properly substituted.)



totality: consider, that is, the "Economic Structure".

For Marx, the essential and defining principle of the Economic Structure is its enduring ruling-class pattern: that is, the 'effective ownership' of most of society's forces of production by a small part of that society (the ruling-class) and the effective ownership of few or none of society's forces of production by the large majority of that society (the workers).<sup>10</sup> Exactly what forces of production are here involved (e.g. whether the arable land as in rural feudalism or the factories and machinery as in urban capitalism), who has effective ownership of them (e.g. whether hereditary lords or capitalists) and how such relations of production actually operate (e.g. whether by the economic laws of feudalism or capitalism) are questions to which the answers will provide a more determinate view of the Economic Structure under consideration.

The ruling-class pattern of the Economic Structure however, whatever its specific form, renders the non-owning majority, the workers, dependent for their survival on the "small part of society who possesses the monopoly of the forces of production" (CI, 235): for the latter are the material means whereby men stay alive. Thus the ruling-class are in the position through their "monopoly" of the forces of production to extract payment from the non-owning labourers and others in exchange for allowing these latter those benefits from

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<sup>10</sup>There are, of course, people — "petty" owners — who are members neither of the ruling class nor of the labouring (or working) class and my wording permits this.

the productive forces which they require to continue living. This payment in the case of the productive workers is surplus labour on the ruling-class-owned forces of production above and beyond what is allocated to keep them alive (which surplus-labour expresses itself in such historical forms as rent-in-kind or money profit). Thus, in one of the most definitive passages, Marx says:

The specific economic form [Economic Structure], in which unpaid surplus is pumped out of direct producers...the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers...reveals the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social structure. (CIII, 791)

In the case of non-productive workers (e.g. state functionaries, personal servants, ideologists and other "parasites"), the payment is labour at mere service functions which directly or indirectly protect the ruling-class economic order, but produce no material use-value.

(There are cases, of course, where the non-owners seek to avoid this exploitative arrangement and attempt to stay alive in some other manner: for example, by beggary, vagabondry or robbery. However, Marx reports in detail in Capital the fate of those who have resorted to such a strategy: whipping, mutilation, slavery, deprivation of children, imprisonment and execution.)

The Economic Structure is in general then, for Marx, the enduring ruling-class pattern of the totality of the relations of production (i.e. a small minority of society effectively owns most of the forces of production and a large majority owns few or none of the forces of production): which ruling-class pattern always involves the ruling-class extracting surplus labour or service from

the non-owning labourers (i.e. its "law of motion").

It is worth adding here that an "enduring ruling-class pattern" embraces for Marx not only those cases in which a ruling-class retains its monopolist holdings but those cases in which it increases such holdings (e.g. in capitalism). So even though there may be continuing changes in relations of production in many respects (e.g. in capitalism, the petty-bourgeoisie being reduced to wage-labourers and wage-labourers being reduced to lumpen proletarians, not to mention individuals merely supplanting, and being supplanted by, one another in economic positions which themselves remain constant), the Economic Structure itself and its "laws of motion" do not change. Its ruling-class pattern persists behind the manifold changes of non-ruling-class relations of production, individuals variously switching economic places and even the membership of the ruling-class itself dwindling; and the extraction of surplus-value according to definite laws of motion -- the principles of operation of such an Economic Structure, of such a ruling-class pattern -- remain constant too (e.g. the feudal lord's exchange of precisely defined protection for the serf's similarly defined labour service, the capitalist's exchange of a certain money salary for the proletarian's weekly labour-power, etc.). It is in this constancy of the Economic Structure and its laws of motion or principles of operation that Marx perceives underlying "form" or "essence" which continues to obtain through whatever changes there are in its production-relations content.

With particular Economic Structures and their laws of motion,



of course, Marx presents a much more specific picture. For example, in his descriptions of the class make-up of the capitalist Economic Structure, the "pattern" Marx presents is a complex mosaic comprised of various groups within the ruling class (e.g. "big landed property", "high finance" and "large-scale industry") and the labouring class (e.g. agricultural, industrial and service workers); as well as in between these two great classes (e.g. the "petty-bourgeoisie" and the professions) and beneath them (e.g. the "lumpenproletariat"). But however determinate and elaborate Marx's representation of the Economic Structure's class make-up may be, classes are such by virtue of, basically, common relations of production.

Hence, in any Economic Structure:

- 1) Members of the ruling-class own enough productive forces other than their personal labour-power that they can exploit them to yield -- through the operation the surplus-value extracting "laws of motion" of the Economic Structure in question -- all the revenue (and more) that is required for subsistence above the social standard: divisions within this ruling-class -- divisions into subclasses -- being a matter of what sort of surplus-value-yielding external productive forces are so owned (e.g. landed-property, machinery, or fluid capital i.e. ownership of not yet specified forces of production). Such division into subclasses, as with class divisions of any sort in Marx's schema, is only historically meaningful insofar as there is a contradiction of ownership interests between the economic groups involved: that is, only when one ruling group's ownership interests



or relations of production must be secured through the derogation of such interests of another ruling group (e.g. the interests of big landed property in nineteenth century England demanded tariffs on corn to protect the value of and revenues from their agricultural holdings, whereas the interests of large-scale industry demanded the removal of such tariffs -- which must raise food prices -- to keep their wage-costs down). When, and only when, such antagonisms of economic interests obtain between ruling-class groups does Marx take them into account in his class analysis of the Economic Structure in question (herein lies the second criterion for Marx of an economic class, of which more later).

2) Members of the productive labouring class own insufficient productive forces other than personal labour-power to subsist at any level without exchanging the latter for the means to stay alive (which economic impoverishment of, and exchange by, the productive labouring class is at the same time enrichment of, and exploitation by, the ruling-class): the divisions within this labouring class being a matter of what sort of personal labour-power is so owned (e.g. in capitalism, skilled or unskilled labour-power, or any gradient of these). However, such divisions in productive labourer ownership are rarely historically significant for Marx inasmuch as there is for him seldom -- nationally, at least -- a "contradiction" in ownership interest, seldom an occasion when the securing of one such group's interests must derogate from another's. When there are economic antagonisms between working-class owners of different

productive labour-powers (e.g. between Irish immigrant workers and native English workers in nineteenth century capitalist Britain), then class division within the direct producer class obtains and subclass analysis becomes of import. (Marx may have drastically under-rated the intensity and range of subclass antagonisms of this sort in his class analysis of the Economic Structure, unlike his emphasis on subclass division in the ruling-class).

3) Other owners of forces of production -- e.g. in capitalism "independent producers", "small masters", "shop-keepers" and so on -- constitute "petty" classes for Marx insofar as the extent of their productive force ownership is relatively small and the mode of exchange of such productive forces relatively independent of the surplus-value-extracting laws of motion of the obtaining Economic Structure. Hence he more or less ignores such classes in his economic (as opposed to his political) analysis.

4) Most of the remaining revenue-receiving groups in capitalist society (lawyers, soldiers, priests, personal servants, salesmen, bureaucrats, police, judges, entertainers, academics, lumpenproletarians, etc.) do not own any significant productive force -- not instruments of production, utilizable natural resources nor (in practice) productive labour-power -- and are to this extent not economic classes at all.

Their economic significance for Marx is that:

1 They live off the surplus-value extracted by the ruling-class from the productive labouring class and are thereby "parasites" within the Economic Structure and upon its laws of motion.

ii They typically play some superstructural or ideological role and are thereby protectors of the capitalist Economic Structure (see Chapter VII) -- performing this protective function is, indeed, the earlier mentioned "payment" they must make to secure those benefits from the ruling-class-owned productive forces they require to stay alive. Marx devotes considerable time to this motley collection of non-productive revenue-receiving, structure-protecting groups in capitalist society -- especially in the volumes of his Theories of Surplus Value -- and he does not seem to have missed the point of their significance in numbers. (Why it is that he does not give such groups more social weight in his anticipation of successful proletarian political revolution against the capitalist order is never made very clear and may constitute a crucial underemphasis on his part:<sup>11</sup> see my Chapter VII, Economic Determinism). But in any case, these groups of "parasites" are not economic classes for Marx to the extent that they own no significant forces of production other than the material commodities and labour power they regularly negate as productive forces by unproductive use. Thus Marx often refers to them as merely "ideological classes" (e.g. CI, 446).

This very brief outline of how Marx gives determinate class shape to an Economic Structure -- focussing essentially on ruling-class and productive-labouring class relations of production and the

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<sup>11</sup>Of course, one could be ingenious here and consider the unused productive force of personal labour-power of these "parasites" as one of the contributing factors of revolution.



antagonistic subclasses within these, but also noting the insignificant class and non-class groups which are, respectively, in the interstices of and parasitical upon this ruling-class pattern -- this brief outline shows us only the bare frame whereby specificity is achieved in Marx's characterization of the class-construction of an Economic Structure. But I think it discloses the underlying general principles he employs in this connection.

Now so far as Marx's particularization of the laws of motion of an Economic Structure is concerned, herein lies perhaps the scientific core of his entire post-1845 enterprise. That is, specification of the laws of the capitalist Economic Structure is the single most extensively treated domain of systematic inquiry of Marx's mature analysis -- dominating most of the second two volumes of Capital, as well as the three books of Theories of Surplus Value. I am not therefore going to venture into the details of this massive literature, but am simply going to identify the set of principles which seem to me of general importance in understanding what Marx means by the "laws of motion" of the Economic Structure -- whether it be Asiatic, ancient, feudal or capitalist:

- 1) The motion of an Economic Structure is the circulation or exchange of productive forces which takes place within it: between, essentially, the ruling-class and the direct producers -- the producers exchanging with the ruling-class some or all of their productive labour-power in return for from the latter the means of subsistence required to keep them alive (the practical necessity of



this exchange being, of course, what ensures the continuous flow of the "motion" in question). For example, in a capitalist Economic Structure, there is an unceasing exchange of labour-power and wages between capitalist and proletarian, a perpetual circulation or "motion" of productive forces changing hands: which exchange is and must be continuous in the system -- hence Marx's persistent imagery of organism in this connection -- for the capitalist to remain a capitalist and for the proletarian to remain productive.

2) The laws of this "motion" have not only to do with the more or less content quantities, standard modes, regularities of circuit, etc., of such and such productive forces in repetitive and structure-conforming exchange between the ruling-class and the direct producers, but -- most important for Marx -- with the regular extraction of surplus value (or surplus labour) by the former from the latter which thereby takes place. The laws of motion associated with this regular extraction of surplus value are, in the case of capitalism, identified in detail by Marx: so that not only does he talk in general terms -- as with other Economic Structures -- of such laws necessitating and regulating exchange of certain productive forces between ruling-class and direct producers in such a manner that standard forms and amounts of surplus value are continuously "pumped out" to the ruling-class; but -- unlike his analysis of the "motion" of other Economic Structures -- he formalizes and schematizes this whole process in its main phases of production and circulation, in its major forms of exploitative extraction (rent, interest, profit),

in its changing content, turnover, rate and accumulation of surplus value expropriation, and so forth and so on. With the particular Economic Structure of capitalism, in short, the laws of motion governing the ruling-class pattern of production relations take on with Marx the character of a massive theoretical system. But the essential content of these economic laws remains as always for him, the regular extraction of surplus-value by the ruling-class from the direct producers via the two's exchange of productive forces, (by, that is, the exchange of means of existence for personal labour power): which extraction is reinforcing of, and made possible by, the monopoly pattern of the relations of production constituting the Economic Structure in question.

Now of the laws of motion of capitalism specifically, it is important to emphasize that Marx sees such laws as different from the laws of motion of any other Economic Structure in this respect: only with capitalism do the laws of motion render the growth of exchange value as the end-in-itself of the cycle of production and circulation (CI, 154). With capitalism, that is, the role of exchange value is no longer as in other economic formations that of a simple medium between use-values (i.e. Commodity → Money → Commodity) but the final goal for the attainment of which use-values are reduced to mere instrumentality (i.e. Money → Commodity → More Money). Otherwise put, the end and aim of production and circulation in capitalism is reversed: where it was once use-values or the service of human needs/wants (with money as just a go-between in the circulation of

use-values), it is now money as such (with use-values, or the service of human needs/wants, as the mere go-between in the circulation of capital). In other words, the economic laws of capitalism represent the real and systematic de-humanization of the production circulation process: replacing the service and amplification of men by use-value as the end of the economic process with the service and amplification of capital by profit as this end (as demonstrated by the recurrent phenomena of use-values being sacrificed -- unemployment, unused factory capacities and destruction of goods are some of the examples given by Marx -- for the benefit of capital gain). Now all this is very perfunctorily put, but it gives the gist of the reason Marx believed the economic laws of capitalism were inherently anti-human, unlike the principles of operation of any other historical Economic Structure which were at least directed towards human ends, if only essentially the use-value benefit of the ruling class.

When we consider together the particular class content and laws of motion of the Economic Structure of capitalism, it is not difficult to discern how a Marxian account might explain and indeed predict the well-known social ills that afflict capitalist society. Thus, for example, pollution of the life-elements can be seen to be an instantiation of the imperative of capital growth exerting its primacy over all considerations of human utility. Economic imperialism similarly can be seen as further instantiation of the same imperative, invading wherever and however capital amplification is assured. Inflation, in turn, can be read as simply the necessary



regular devaluation of money: necessary, that is, to maintain the ruling-class's structural monopoly of wealth intact in the face of forced increases in wages. Then, to conclude this repertoire of examples, replacement of repetitive labour-power by machinery (intrinsically liberative) can be understood to pose the problem -- as opposed to the social triumph -- of "unemployment" only because of capitalist ownership of such machinery and its benefits. So the comprehension of various problems within capitalist society -- more or less intractable to "bourgeois" economic theory -- might proceed employing the Marxian explanatory frame of Economic Structure and laws of motion.

In summary, just as with a particular Economic Structure Marx presents a much more specific and complex picture of the class set-up than merely ruling-class and labourers and so -- inseparably -- he presents a much more specific picture of the "laws of motion" of such an Economic Structure than merely that of the former "pumping unpaid surplus-labour out of" the latter. But whether his concern is general or specific characterization, it is always the case with the mature Marx that he sees in the ruling-class Economic Structure and its laws the "innermost secret" of this or any other historical society: the "secret" that is systematically "hidden" by the legal and political superstructure, the ideology and the forms of social consciousness of the society in question (in ways much of the rest of this paper will attempt to point out), and the "secret" that his work is most of all dedicated to telling.



Before concluding this section, it is worth making a few final remarks on Marx's central and traditionally problematic concept of "economic class".

1) All classes constitutive of the Economic Structure -- generally speaking the ruling-class, the productive labourer class and any remaining classes, as well as the subclasses within all these -- are only economic classes: that is, each is (to use Marx's frequent term) merely a class, or subclass, "in itself". Whether any is organized or conscious of itself as a class (or subclass), whether any is "for itself" is a matter of superstructural and ideological "reflex" to the economic situation: it is not an economic matter. Hence Marx says such things as:

Economic conditions had first transformed the mass of the people of the country into workers. The combination of capital has created for this mass a common situation, common interests. This mass is already a class as against capital, but not yet for itself. In the struggle...this mass becomes united and constitutes itself as a class for itself....But the struggle of class against class is a political struggle. (PofP, 150)

2) Economic classes, as I have already indicated, not only require common relations of production to count as classes, but also require -- to be historically meaningful -- "contradiction" between the common ownership interests so involved. The basic contradiction of this sort is always of course for Marx that between the ownership interests of the ruling-class and the ownership interests of the direct producers: a contradiction that is implicit in the very notion of an Economic Structure, in the very notion of a "ruling-class pattern" in the relations of production. But whatever is treated as a real class

phenomenon by Marx, whether basic or peripheral, whether referring to general classes or particular (sub) classes, involves some "contradiction" between the common relations of production or interests of the classes involved. This dimension of contradiction is essential to all groups that Marx counts as real economic classes: as opposed to sets of people united only by common relations of production -- "classes" only in name. (I think this further criterion of what counts as an economic class for Marx -- that is, that the latter is such not only by virtue of common relations of production but by virtue of "contradiction" with other common relations of production -- deserves special emphasis insofar as it shows the way one might properly complete the famous unfinished manuscript on classes in Capital, Volume III;<sup>12</sup> as well as more generally, pointing up the inherent antagonism of material interests involved for Marx in economic class division, which antagonism is for him the spring of the entire legal-political

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<sup>12</sup>Here is the passage in question (CIII, 886):  
 The first question to be answered is this: what constitutes a class? ....At first glance, the identity of revenues and sources of revenues. For example, in a capitalist society there are three great social groups whose members, the individuals forming them live on wages profit and ground rent respectively i.e. revenues, on the realisation of their labour power, their capital, and their landed property i.e. sources of revenues. However, from this standpoint i.e. conceiving classes in terms of common revenues and sources of revenues, physicians and officials, e.g. would also constitute two classes, for they belong to two distinct social groups, the members of each of these groups receiving their revenue from one and the same source the same would also be true of the infinite fragmentation of interest and rank into which the division of social labour splits labourers as well as capitalists and landowners -- the latter, e.g. into owners of vineyards, farm owners, owners of forests, mine owners and owners of fisheries. ....[Here the manuscript breaks off.]

superstructure or State (see Chapter IV).

3) The ruling-class pattern of the Economic Structure implies, as I have emphasized, the basic contradiction between the interests of the ruling owners and the interests of the direct producers from whom surplus labour (value) is extracted. This bears repeating inasmuch as there should be no doubt of Marx's view of all further class antagonisms as quite secondary (e.g. between particular classes or "subclasses" within the ruling class). Classes of any sort are real economic classes for Marx by virtue of the contradiction of their common interests with some other economic group's common interests, but the "basic" or "essential" classes and class contradiction involves for him the ruling owners and the direct producers insofar as:

i These two classes between them own all or almost all the material means (i.e. productive forces) whereby the society reproduces its life (hence their "basic" or "essential" status qua relations of production).

ii From the exchanges of these two classes all or almost all the surplus value extraction (i.e. exploitation) of the society is generated (hence their "basic" or "essential" status qua "contradictory" relations of production).

On these accounts then any other conflicts of class interest count for Marx as less central, if not ultimately derivative.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>In Book 2, I shall suggest that there are many "structures of domination" that may not involve exploitation" in the Marxian sense, but are no less worthy of attention on this account qua modes of domination and class antagonism.



From all this description of the Economic Structure and its "ruling-class pattern", we can understand at least by negation what sort of society Marx had in mind when he talked about communism -- obviously no ruling-class ownership nor laws of motion of exchange whereby a surplus value is extracted from the direct producers for rulers and parasites' revenues, nor any other form of class antagonism. Indeed one of the most interesting features of the post-historical society Marx sketches is -- in addition to and corresponding with its communal ownership of the forces of production -- the general "law of motion" of exchange he envisages it as being ultimately governed by: namely, in Marx's own famous words, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" (GP, 37). Here as one can see, not only is the exploitative aspect of all historical modes of exchange transcended (i.e. there is no surplus value extraction by one class from another by virtue of ownership monopoly); but exchange itself takes on a new character (i.e. it surpasses the principle of quid pro quo? altogether). The radical quality of Marx's vision here cannot be overestimated: exchange is no longer a matter of giving in order to take as in all hitherto existing societies but giving according to one's abilities (independently of pay-off) and receiving according to one's needs (independently of contribution). Exchange in the communist utopia is thus organic (i.e. there is no division of interest) and free (i.e. it is determined by individual "abilities" and "needs"). Strictly speaking, it is not really "exchange" as we know it at all, inasmuch as grant and reception are not yoked. Rather, it is the



arrangement of love socially construed.

But of course in all historical societies, the antagonistic ruling-class Economic Structure and its exploitative laws of motion rule and divide as for Marx the "essence" of the human condition. We have just investigated the mechanics of this "essence". For the precise ways in which its determination of other "superstructural" factors coercively obtains, I reserve a special section, Chapter VII.

## CHAPTER IV

### LEGAL AND POLITICAL SUPERSTRUCTURE

The legal and political superstructure or, as Marx often more elliptically puts it, the "superstructure",<sup>1</sup> is similar to the other categories of his general theoretical framework in that it is never accorded explicit definition. The interpretator here, as elsewhere, can only derive such characterization from Marx's work, not directly cite it. But the problems in this regard are considerably more tractable than with such categories as "relations of production/Economic Structure" or "ideology".

Briefly put, the legal and political superstructure is the investitured institutional complex of the State: the "official side" of society which "stands above" the mode of production as its sanctioned and coercive regulator (e.g. "the courts, the army and the bureaucracy" (RZ, 193)). In general, what distinguishes this legal and political superstructure or official state mechanism from

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<sup>1</sup>Sometimes Marx uses the term "superstructure" to refer to just legal and political institutions, and sometimes he uses it to apply more broadly to these and ideology and forms of social consciousness as a unitary whole. I shall use the term in the same permissive way, with the context of such use rendering its precise reference evident.

the "underlying" Economic Structure to which it "corresponds" is that all its content is or has been consciously constructed by some form or other of recognized social authority: where as the latter's more fundamental content -- more fundamental in the sense, among others, that that which is "recognized" is logically prior to that which "recognizes" -- obtains "independently of the will of individuals" (GID, 37)<sup>2</sup> and is only "scientifically discoverable" (CI, 542). Marx follows the gist of this general distinction in almost all his discussions of the legal-political superstructure and the economic base.

Implicit in this general distinction between Economic Structure (C) and legal-political superstructure (D) are a complex of closely related specific distinctions which Marx alludes to repeatedly in his corpus. These are:

a) The relations D involves are in terms of formal rights and obligations whereas the relations C involves are in terms of effective powers and constraints (e.g. GID, 80 and 352-9).

b) D is the de jure representative of "the general interest", whereas C is the de facto organization of particular material interests (GID, 45-6, 78).

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<sup>2</sup>This favorite claim of Marx that relations of production obtain "independently of the will of individuals" has often been wrongly interpreted as denial of free will simpliciter. Marx is, of course, making no such metaphysical claim, but is merely stating the empirically incontrovertible -- that the economic order carries on independently of the will (as opposed to actions) of individuals (as opposed to groups) See GID, 357 ff.

c) D's form is visible and institutional whereas C's form is concealed and unacknowledged (CIII, 791).

The really contentious point about Marx's notion of a legal-political superstructure is not, however, the variously articulated distinction he draws between it and the economic substructure, but the fact that he regards it as a super structure. What, one is here moved to ask, are the reasons for Marx ascribing primacy to the structure of the economy vis à vis that of law and politics? Why is the latter construed as the "base", the infrastructure, and the former as the "reflex", the superstructure? No single question has been more persistently put to Marx's theoretical framework than this.

Marx suggests a number of mutually re-enforcing answers to this query, which are briefly as follows:

1 The legal and political superstructure arises in whole and in part only upon already existing antagonisms of material interest inherent in the production relations/Economic Structure (which it "expresses" and "regulates") and does not obtain independently of these economic antagonisms (PofP, 151).<sup>3</sup> Thus, says Marx, the legal and political superstructure is the "official, active and conscious expression of the Economic Structure of society" (Bott. p. 222)

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<sup>3</sup>Note here the similarity in principle to Locke's notion of the State as an "umpire" arising to resolve disputes over individual property. Like Marx, Locke (not to mention Hobbes and others) takes it as obvious that the erection of the State depends upon already existing antagonisms of interest. However, unlike Marx, these philosophers do not discern a ruling-class pattern to such antagonisms of interest which for Marx renders the "umpire" or "Leviathan" of the State ultimately subordinate rather <sup>than</sup> sovereign in its function.



wherein (among other, secondary antagonisms) the material interest of the ruling-class -- to sustain its expropriation of the surplus labour of others -- is systematically antagonistic to the material interest of the ruled class(es) from whom this surplus labour is expropriated. If, Marx holds, there were no such systematic antagonisms of material interest inherent in the relations of production/Economic Structure -- as in the projected communist utopia where there would be no private power to use or exploit society's forces of production and exclude others from doing so -- then there would be no legal and political superstructure required to preside over such divisions (just as, Marx contended, there was no State before such private ownership of the productive forces came into being). Because the necessary material ground of the superstructure -- antagonistic relations of production which it is historically constructed to meet -- would no longer exist, it would "wither away" (CM, 74). Insofar as the legal and political superstructure is thus dependent for its existence on the ownership divisions of the economic system, it is derivative and the latter is primary. The two are related, to put it loosely, as problem-raiser and problem-responder (thus Marx's term "reflex" for the superstructure).

Marx's claim here of exhaustive dependency of the State or superstructure on antagonistic relations of production/Economic Structure does not, of course, rule out a central planning and distributing agency for production in the communist utopia: such an agency is not a State or superstructure but wholly integral to

the needs-production dynamic (Distribution here, for instance, is not dictated by ownership or juridical right but by the principle of "to each according to his needs"). On the other hand, Marx may have overlooked certain antagonisms of interest other than those involved in relations of production which themselves could ground -- and historically have grounded -- an officiating State "standing above" needs and production: for which other forms of antagonism, see Book 2 of this essay).

2 Except in revolution (where the economic base is proximately altered by the operations of the legal and political superstructure), any conflict between the requirements or laws of the class-patterned relations of production/Economic Structure and the requirements or laws of the legal and political superstructure is resolved in favour of the former. For example, the established civil rights of the superstructure will be suspended or ignored if their operation represents a threat to the ruling-class monopoly of productive forces or "laws of motion" of the economic base. The requirements of the latter take precedence over the requirements of the former in this, or any other, case of non-revolutionary disjunction. In this sense too, then, the Economic Structure owns primacy over the legal and political superstructure (for a detailed discussion of this and other forms of "Economic Determinism", see Chapter VII).

3 Since men cannot live on the content of the legal and political superstructure, whereas they can and do live on the productive-force content of the relations of production/Economic Structure, they act

in accordance with the latter rather than the former:

Material interests preponderate ... the Middle Ages could not live on Catholicism, nor the ancient world on politics. On the contrary, it is the mode in which they gained a livelihood that explains why here politics and there Catholicism played the chief part. (CI, 82)

Insofar as men act in accordance with their relations to the material means of human life (i.e. what is/can be used to make material use-value) rather than their relations to the stuff of law and politics as such (i.e. what is not/cannot be so used) the relations of production/Economic Structure is more "basic" than legal and political superstructure. In this sense (which underlies, of course, sense (2)), the former-again-owns primacy.

(That something is a productive force (i.e. is/can be used to make a material use-value) does not mean that it must be so used -- as the "can be" wording indicates. Hence the ruling class's effective ownership relations to housing facilities, foodstuffs, tools, natural resources et al which may not in fact be productively used but merely parasitically consumed by them in one way or another, still qualify as relations of production. And it is in accordance with such and other relations of production, Marx claims, that men (the ruling-class most importantly) generally act -- as opposed to in accordance with rights, obligations and other claims of the legal and political superstructure. Nevertheless there may still be here a too narrow concept on Marx's part of what counts as the "means of life" which men act in accordance with: for which issue, again, see Book 2).



To this point we have seen that Marx distinguishes the legal and political superstructure from the production relations/Economic Structure in a number of ways and that on empirical grounds he regards it as a superstructure in its relationship to the latter. However we have not yet identified the precise nature of the relationship in question itself: we have dealt rather with the nature of the two factors related and which factor, for Marx, owns primacy.

As I have suggested in (1) above, the superstructure in Marx's view arises because, and only because, of antagonisms of material interest inherent in the economic base. It is a social mechanism for dealing with the problems of these antagonisms and would, Marx holds, disappear or "wither away" with the removal of the latter in a communist society (so far, his claim is more or less in line with philosophical tradition, except in his belief in the real possibility of a future communism). The question we must now ask is, precisely how does the superstructure relate to the economic antagonisms it is "raised" to deal with? For Marx the answer -- which is radically counter-traditional -- is simply this: it relates always to the relations of production/Economic Structure (except in epochal revolutionary periods) so as to maintain the ruling-class pattern of the latter intact. That is, far from being the resolving mechanism of common interest it is conventionally held to be, the State for Marx relates to the economic antagonisms it is raised to deal with by securing them -- or rather, the production relations/Economic Structure in which they are inherent -- from alteration (and hence,



from resolution). Thus Marx says such things as:

The bourgeois state is nothing but a mutual insurance pact [cf. Social Contract] of the bourgeois class both against its members taken individually and against the exploited class.  
(CM, 48)

There is a wide variety of ways in which the superstructure can be seen as thus protecting the ruling-class pattern of the economic base and its inherent antagonisms of material interest. Marx repeatedly draws attention to five:

1 It validates some or all existing relations of production (powers) as legal property relations (rights) and thereby as well validates the ruling-class's ownership monopoly and extraction of surplus-value.

2 It enforces some or all existing relations of production by virtue of enforcing legal property relations which "express" the former, and thereby as well-again-enforces the ruling-class's monopoly ownership and extraction of surplus-value.

3 It adjusts whatever requires adjusting to perpetuate the ruling-class pattern of the production relations/Economic Structure (e.g. in a capitalist social formation, by periodically regulating wages, imposing protective duties, forcing sale of labour power, funding capitalist ventures, waging imperialist wars, persecuting dissidents, etc.)

4 It adjudicates individual and group disputes over proprietary claims (which disputes arise from the inherent antagonisms of the ruling-class relations of production/Economic Structure) in a manner

always consistent with the perpetuation of the latter.

5 It misleads some or all of the people of a society into acceptance of the production relations/Economic Structure by certain "mystifying" and "concealing" characteristics of its formally articulated content:

i by its voluntaristic language which masks economic compulsion by a vocabulary of personal "will" and "agreement" (i.e. men do not personally "will" or "agree" to enter their various economic relations, as the voluntaristic language of legal and political contract pretend: on the contrary, they are generally "compelled" to enter such relations as a matter of practical necessity (e.g. GID, 79)).

ii by the "abstract" nature of its legal and political rights which imply universal equality (capitalism) or mutuality (feudalism) while in fact permitting the opposite of these (i.e. the abstract and equal right of all to private property in capitalist society permits in fact the virtual propertylessness of the vast majority (e.g. CI, 583 ff); the universal mutuality of obligation in feudal society permits in fact the lord's extraction from the serf of surplus labour "without any compensation" (e.g. CIII, 790 ff)).

iii by the community of interest or "illusory community" (GID, 91) it purports itself to represent when a minority or ruling-class interest is in fact what it protects (i.e. the modern legal and political superstructure purports to be securing the "public interest" when in fact its law is merely "the will of the bourgeois class made

into a law for all" (CM, 67) and its political power is "merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another" (e.g. CM, 74).

As (i), (ii) and (iii) suggest, the legal and political superstructure has an important ideological dimension: that is why Marx describes it as "practico-idealist" in nature (GID, 85). However because the ideological factor as a whole encloses considerably more area than that covered by (5), Marx generally extends separate treatment to it (which I shall deal with in Chapter V).

Before proceeding any further with this exposition of Marx's concept of the legal and political superstructure, it is worth attending to what has often been highlighted as a problem. That is, how can the superstructure be conceived of as an "expression" or "reflex" of the economic base when it itself may have been a necessary condition of the latter's formation? For example, how can the capitalist legal and political superstructure be said to be an expression or reflex of capitalist Economic Structure when (as Marx himself indignantly affirms throughout his section on the "Primitive Accumulation" in Capital) "legal enactments" played a central role in forming this very economic base?

The answer is, simply, that the political and legal superstructure is related to the Economic Structure and its "laws of motion" in a different way between historical epochs (e.g. the transition period from feudalism to capitalism) than it is within these epochs. In such transition periods, Marx holds, the productive forces have "outgrown" the Economic Structure and its laws and thereby

transformed the latter's historical status from a "form of social development" to a "fetter" on such development. In this situation, and only in this situation, the official agency for regulating social intercourse -- the legal and political superstructure -- cannot both maintain the Economic Structure and its laws intact and allow for the preservation and development of the productive forces. It is on such occasions confronted with what Marx called a "fundamental contradiction" in the mode of production. In this situation, and, again it must be stressed, only in this situation, it becomes possible -- and indeed technically necessary -- for the superstructure to operate in some way as an agency for the qualitative alteration (as opposed to maintenance) of the Economic Structure and its laws: in accordance with the requirements of productive-force development.

But once this period of epochal transition is achieved, once the Economic Structure and its laws have been altered in form so that it is no longer a "fetter" on the productive forces but a new "form of their development", then the superstructure is ipso facto deprived of the material grounds of its revolutionary potential and reverts to its normal function of maintaining the economic base intact. In short, the legal and political superstructure operates always as an "expression" or "reflex" of the Economic Structure and its laws except in periods of epochal transition (such as that between feudalism and capitalism or between capitalism and socialism). What may appear to be an inconsistent stance by Marx on the functional status of the superstructure is in reality a matter of whether the



latter is located in a transitional or non-transitional historical context. However, I hasten to add, even in a transitional context the legal and political superstructure still remains in an important sense derivative or a "reflex" of material conditions: that is, with respect to the forces of production. As I have already suggested in my account above, Marx sees all occasions of the legal and political superstructure having primacy over the Economic Structure and its laws as occasions of the forces of production having "out-grown" the economic formation and causing the state superstructure to, in turn, exert atypical causal force over the former. So even in those exceptional cases of revolutionary social change, "material conditions" for Marx continue to be the ultimate determinant of superstructural operation. If it isn't the economic base determining the legal and political superstructure it is (in a somewhat different sense of "determine") the forces of production: in all cases, for Marx the superstructure remains just that, superstructural. Indeed Marx is so adamant on this point that when he does treat revolutionary situations where the superstructure can be said to alter rather than "correspond to" the economic infrastructure, he typically leaves out in his summative statements the middle-link of superstructural influence altogether and talks merely of the productive forces ut sic bursting the economic order (e.g. CI, 763). I think this habit may have led to many misunderstandings about the nature and extent of the superstructure's derivativeness with respect to the latter.

Another prima facie paradox that may seem to arise out of Marx's concept of the legal and political superstructure and its relationship to the economic base is worth considering here as well. The "paradox" in question is this: how can the superstructure be held to be the mechanism for the ruling-class to maintain its economic hegemony intact when this same superstructure is often noted by Marx to pass laws that seem explicitly against the present interests of ruling-class members? For example, English factory legislation limiting the working day of labourers to ten hours (a piece of legislation that earns considerable notice from Marx in Capital) comprised, on the face of it, the interests of factory owners; because such legislation limited the time per day that the factory labourer could work for the owner's profit (so that economists like Oxford's Nassau Senior claimed the "last hour" -- the profit-hour -- was being thereby eliminated and, with it, the safety of industrial capital), it seemed very much against at least some ruling-class members' economic interests. So how, when the bill was passed, could the superstructure still be held by Marx as the executor of ruling-class interests?

The first thing to be made clear here is that Marx claims that the state superstructure maintains ruling-class interests with respect to the latter as a collective entity; or, otherwise put, with respect to the overall ruling-class pattern of the production relations/Economic Structure. So it is quite consistent with this principle of the superstructure -- base relationship -- namely, that

the former "correspond" to the collective economic interest of the ruling-class -- that this or that member or group of members have their particular interest or interests derogated: for the good of the class as a whole (in this case, the collective interest of the ruling-class being served by the better preservation of the endangered "golden goose" -- the labour-force -- which the bill in question secured). Understanding of this collective sense of ruling-class interest is crucial to understanding the nature of the superstructure and its relationship to the economic base. To recite the famous Communist Manifesto remark:

The bourgeois state is nothing but a mutual insurance pact of the bourgeois class both taken against its members individually and against members of the exploited class.

However Marx emphasizes in this case that not even the particular interests of ruling-class sector (albeit a pre-eminent sector) were in fact compromised by this or any other form of factory legislation. Despite the ideological rhetoric of a number of industrial capitalists (e.g. earthenware manufacturers), press organs (e.g. The Economist), academic apologists (e.g. Nassau Senior) and others who opposed such legislation as "impossible", what the latter's passage in fact meant (insofar as it was effectively worded and got applied)<sup>4</sup> was merely the "intensification of labour" by,

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<sup>4</sup>Marx frequently draws attention to the inadequate formulation and application of Parliamentary legislation (e.g. CI, 479-480, 494-5) which ensures that little or nothing is, in fact, changed by such except official documents. This is one of the common duping features of the legal-political superstructure which occasions Marx's general description of the latter as "illusory".



mainly, the improvement of machinery; and thus the maintenance of the economic position and surplus value appropriation rate of even the particular interests of the industrial bourgeoisie intact. Indeed Marx suggests such and similar legislation actually benefits the interests of this particular section of the ruling-class, as well as the ruling-class generally (a) by requiring greater capital outlays for the improved machinery: and thereby "hastening on the decline of small masters, and the concentration of capital" (CI, 477) and (b) by "relatively depreciating the value of labour power" (CI, 406): and thereby "setting free" labourers replaced by machinery to swell the "industrial reserve army" available to the ruling-class, both for new ventures and for disciplining the already employed. So what appears to be the derogation by the superstructure (i.e. factory legislation) of the interests of a particular, central ruling-class sector is in fact here the maintenance and, indeed, promotion of such interests. In this case, ruling-class interests are distributively as well as collectively secured by superstructural phenomenon. Such a course of affairs is typical in Marx's view. Hence even though an important distinction must be made between the collective and particular interests of the ruling-class, with the former as always primary in the base-superstructure relationship, both sorts of interest are in the end typically held intact by the latter, despite "appearances" to the contrary. (This is not to say, certainly, that Marx is suggesting that legislation like the ten-hour bill should have been opposed by



the working class, or was even possible without their militant pressure for it, just because it ultimately benefited the ruling-class. Marx's dialectical position here is that it is in precisely this sort of way that the seed of revolution is nourished within the bosom of the established order: what is good for the latter is also at the same time the nurturing of the agencies of its future destruction).

Of course, with all phenomena in the official, superstructural sphere the correspondence of this sphere and its phenomena to ruling-class economic interests (collective and particular) is systematically obscured by the language and rationale of law and politics. There are few more persistent general points made by Marx about the superstructure than this. As we have already noted, a society's legal and political superstructure has an official language and rationale of self-description that obfuscates the economic bases's antagonistic ruling-class pattern, like an all-covering "shroud". But for a general description of this and the rest of ideology, we reserve the next section.

So far, I have emphasized the derivative status of the legal and political superstructure with respect to the production relations/Economic Structure. But it should also be emphasized here that Marx still regarded the former as necessary in practice to the latter's maintenance. That is, though he regarded the superstructure as always reflecting, and indeed depending for its very existence upon a class-divided economic base, he considered the persistence (not

existence) of the latter in its ruling-class pattern as requiring, in turn, a legal-political overlay. Without the latter, he repeatedly suggests, the relations of production/Economic Structure would not be protected by the several practical exigencies of all durable structures of domination, such as:

- a) social appearance -- Schein -- of "sanctity", and
- b) collective agency of enforcement for ruling-class interests "as a whole".

Now of course I have already treated such superstructural functions as a) and b) in finer detail above. What I am concerned to do here is to consider them briefly from the point of view of their practical necessity or indispensability as defense-mechanisms for the economic base: from which discerned indispensability of function we will be in a better position to make sense of the central role Marx ascribes to the superstructural phenomenon of political class struggle. First of all, a) provides the protection of "mask" to the economic base (what ideology compounds), and constitutes for Marx the general "illusory" quality of the legal-political superstructure which in all societies of man's history conceals the true nature of its ruling-class economic system. Though he never directly says so, Marx generally implies this hoodwinking sanctification by the legal-political superstructure of the economic order to be a required cover-up mechanism for the latter: without which it would be exposed (in the long run, ruinously) for the systematic exploitation system it is. Though in considering this indispensable "veil" function of

the superstructure we unavoidably introduce ideology into our ambit of inquiry, the mere officialized institutionalization (ideology aside) of economic power by State organization must be appreciated as itself a hallowing of the former: its very nature as a ceremonialized bureaucratic system officering the whole of society accords it the mystique of elevated awful status, independently of formulated description. Marx, however, only hints at this kafkaesque phenomenon and, in general, tends to conflate the institutional and ideological aspects of State sanctification of the relations of production/Economic Structure.

b), on the other hand, is a straightforward organizational requirement. Ruling-class relations of production require more than the particular powers-to-exclude constituting them to survive intact as a secure system. Some additional collective co-ordinator, adjudicator, adjuster of enforcement in the interests of the ruling-class "as a whole" must exist -- that is, a legal and political super-structure -- or the economic order in question will be ill-equipped to maintain its hold for long. In the first place, individual interests of the ruling-class are not necessarily consistent with the interests of this class as a whole: ipso facto, some resolver of possible conflicts between these particular interests must be established "on top of" the production relations/Economic Structure (The legal and political superstructure, the State, that thus arises is, as it were, the expression of a "Social Contract" among ruling-class members to yield to a common representative of their interests



as a whole in order to protect themselves from class-destructive internecine strife.) In the second place, individual economic powers of members of the ruling-class are easier to resist or usurp than these powers enlarged in a collective form: ipso facto, some combination of these powers in the unified body of a superstructure is necessary to ensure the maximum security required to sustain the systematically exploitative and antagonistic economic order beneath. (The State might that is thereby raised is, as it were, the "Leviathan" created by the ruling-class's combination of power into a single body, which then guards the relations of production/Economic Structure as the unbrookable "organized power of one class for oppressing another" (CM, 74)). Again here, Marx implies the superstructure as indispensable to the maintenance of a ruling-class economic order without stating such directly. But his implication here as earlier is no less firm for that: it is evident in almost his every discussion of superstructural function.

"Social appearance of sanctity" and "collective agency for ruling-class interests as a whole" would seem thus for Marx coincident requirements for the persistence of the ruling-class economic order; or, otherwise put, the indispensable shields of any durable system of exploitation -- holist "fraud" and "force" respectively. Such protective functions afforded by the legal and political superstructure seem indeed so thoroughly indispensable in Marx's view to the security of ruling-class economic power arrangements that even the working class majority of a nascent socialist society are held by him to



require State machinery to maintain their economic ascendancy intact against the defeated capitalist minority i.e. "the dictatorship of the proletariat" (though here, uniquely, the "social appearance of sanctity" would not be "illusory" or "fraudulent" for Marx insofar as the State, for the first time in its history, putatively protects a non-exploitative economic order.) The superstructure is in a way thus, for Marx, as much a sine qua non condition of the former's persistence as this former is for the superstructure's existence. The two are dialectically integrated, so to say. Of course, Marx famously believed that a non-class economic order would require no such superstructure or State insofar as there would be no intrinsic antagonisms of material interest to institutionally mystify or enforce. But so long as the economic order is class-ruptured, an "active, conscious and official expression" of this base contradiction, the State, must for Marx preside over the former to ensure the preservation of its ruling-class pattern.

It is perhaps only when this status of indispensability of the legal-political superstructure to the ruling-class economic order's preservation is appreciated that we can understand why Marx counts superstructural "class struggle" -- and all class struggle for Marx is "political" or superstructural<sup>5</sup> -- as so important in

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<sup>5</sup>Thus Marx says such things as "the struggle of class against class is a political [i.e. superstructural] struggle" (PofP, 150) and, more elaborately:

On the other hand, however, every movement in which the working cont'd

history:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle (CM, 45).

Marx's line of thought seems to go something like this:

1 The legal and political superstructure is the indispensable general protector of the ruling-class relations of production/Economic Structure.

2 Therefore to maintain the ruling-class relations of production/Economic Structure, the legal and political superstructure must be under the ruling-class's control: otherwise the former will be insecure to the extent that its essential mechanism of defense is insecure. Conversely, to alter the ruling-class relations of production/Economic Structure, the legal and political superstructure must be seized from the ruling-class's control: otherwise the former will remain secure to the extent that its essential mechanism of defense is secure.

3 The only effective way either to keep or to seize control over the legal and political superstructure is through class-for-itself (i.e. political class) action (which class action necessarily involves

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class comes out as a class against the ruling-classes and tries to coerce them by pressure from without is a political movement. For instance, the attempts in a particular factory or even in a particular trade to force a shorter working day out of individual capitalists by strikes etc., is a purely economic movement. On the other hand, the movement to force through an eight-hour, etc., law is a political movement. And in this way out of the separate economic movements of the workers there grows up everywhere a political movement, that is to say a movement of the class, with object of enforcing its interests in a general form, in a form possessing general, socially coercive force (SC, 328).

some form or other of class struggle insofar as the existence of a class presupposes the existence of another class or classes with antagonistic material interests: see p. 12, Chapter III. That such class-for-itself action -- "class struggle" -- is in practice alone effective in keeping or seizing control of the protective superstructure is the case because it alone possesses the realized "general form" (great social group aware of itself, and committed to acting, as a great social group) and the material-interest content (common economic stake) together required to achieve disposition over State machinery. Without this 'realized general form', attempts to keep or seize control of the superstructure will be too particularistic to be socially effective. And without the content of common material interests, this 'general form', in turn, will be too "idealist" to endure through the pressures of unshared relations to the means of life. Political class action or "class struggle" is, thus, the key to control of the State or superstructure -- demonstrably in the past: probably, therefore, in the future.

4 From 1, 2, and 3, class struggle must more or less certainly be considered as the sole effective agency for keeping or seizing control of the legal and political superstructure and thereby, since the latter is the necessary general protector of the economic order, the only mode of action whereby maintenance or change of the real "anatomy" or "form" of the sociohistorical process is secured.

Now this line of thought of Marx's is guided by several important supportive beliefs which it is crucial to identify. Assuming



1 to be true, for example, 2 as a whole is true only if one believes, further, that there is no other practicable way of altering the ruling-class relations of production/Economic Structure than by seizing its indispensable mechanism of defense, the State. Yet the ruling-class itself or its superstructural agents or some combination of these and others might evolve the State away from its historical function of ruling-class protection and into conformity with its long pretended general interest function with no such seizure "from beneath" required (a possibility in which Social Democrats seem to believe). Or, again, the economic order might be altered by bypassing superstructural mediation altogether -- with State repression at the same effectively resisted and negated -- through workers and others taking over, slowly or rapidly, the means of production directly (a possibility to which anarchists seem committed). Or whatever -- there is more ways than one to skin a cat, more ways than one to subvert the production relations/Economic Structure than by seizing its superstructural armour away from ruling-class control. But these alternative possibilities Marx must -- and does -- believe to be impracticable in inferring the latter part of (2) from (1). (Such "supportive" judgements indeed are so prominent in his work that the orthodox followers of Marx have since regarded them as something akin to articles of creed). Then, even assuming all of (2) to be true -- notwithstanding alternative possibilities like the above -- (3) is only true if and only one believes, still further, that great groups of men in society cannot be enduringly united on other grounds



(e.g. humanist) than class relations of production or material interests. This sort of alternative Marx in one way or another certainly entertained, but -- again -- firmly rejected: as light-headed, if not downright reactionary. However despite his general rigueur de ligne here there are a few largely ignored hints in Marx's mature work that the schema I have set out above -- reasoning from the indispensability of the superstructure as a general protector of the ruling-class economic order to the view that class struggle is the only mode of action whereby maintenance or change of the underlying "essence" of society is secured -- is not quite so restrictive as is generally thought. To begin with, the possibility of specific superstructural agents not in fact protecting the ruling-class economic pattern but being quite "free from partisanship" is not only allowed by Marx but described by him as having actually obtained, at the height of industrial capitalism (CI, 9). Then again he was well aware of the possibility that ruling-class members (such as the young capitalist Robert Owen) could disengage from their present economic interests; and indeed he openly called for in his Preface to Capital to promote through the superstructure the interests of the working class:

Apart from higher motives, therefore, their own most important interests dictate to the classes that are for the nonce the ruling ones, the removal of all legally removable hindrances to the free development of the working class (CI, 9).

And then, he occasionally remarked on the possibility that the "class struggle" need not be violent and that power might change hands from the capitalists to the proletarians peacefully:

We know of the allowances that we must make for the institutions, customs and traditions of the various countries: and we do not deny that there are countries such as America, England, and I would add Holland if I knew your institutions better, where the working people may achieve their goal by peaceful means (OB, 494).

With one possible exception, these qualifications are quite compatible with his line of thought as I have described it. The possible exception is his claim that "their most important interests dictate to the classes that are for the nonce the ruling ones the removal of all legally removable hindrances to the free development of the working class". This seems to suggest the possibility that the ruling-class themselves might revolutionize the economic base by superstructural means (i.e. "removal of all legally removable hindrance to the free development of the working class") -- a possibility which, of course, apparently violates the "line of thought" in question in the most fundamental way. Coming as it does from the most unimpeachable source in all Marx's writing, Capital, it seems an extraordinary and suggestive remark.<sup>6</sup> However, in the main, the view that the

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<sup>6</sup>Jerry Cohen makes the following point here, worth citing verbatim:

The Capital, p. 9 quote is less puzzling when we read the context which shows why it is in the interests of the ruling-class to allow the working class to develop itself: it is because then, when the revolution comes, there'll be less chance they'll have their heads chopped off by them. If you're going to be displaced, better "humane" than "brutal" displacers. Here, interestingly, something is in the interest of the people who are capitalists which is in no way in the interests of the survival of capitalism. Marx is saying that there is something in the interests of capitalists as individuals which they should consult against even their class interests, given the imminence of revolution. I don't want a deluge if it isn't going to be après moi.

superstructure is the indispensable and incorrigible "mask" and "weapon" protecting the ruling-class's economic hegemony; that its existence as such requires its control by the ruling-class to sustain this rule and by some other class(es) to alter it; and that political class struggle (likely violent at some point) is, in turn, the only effective way of keeping or getting this control -- in the main, this is Marx's firm line on the legal and political superstructure and its disposition in all periods of history.

As we can readily discern, the importance thus granted to the superstructural realm in Marx's theory is very considerable. Indeed Marx here and elsewhere lays such great emphasis on the superstructural realm in his social philosophy (a sort of materialist twist on Hegel's notion of the State as the bearer of the Universal), that one of the most moving criticisms of his position -- exemplified by the anarchist Bakunin's opposition -- is that he actually betrays the working class struggle in his German love for the State. But whatever the merits or demerits of his position on the significance of the superstructural domain, we can see that -- for all its dependency on and derivativeness from the production relations/Economic Structure -- this superstructure owns central import to Marx as a socio-historical factor. That it is always in some sort of "reflex" relationship with the mode of production underneath does not -- as many have thought -- render it somehow impotent or superfluous for him as a mechanism or phenomenon. On the contrary, it is as vitally important for Marx in the life process of a society as defense



mechanisms are for Freud in the life-process of an individual. It is the historically constructed and visible hold whereby internal conflict is maintained in the grip of unseen (economic) structure: the so to say conscious "ego-formation" of society overlaying, regulating and repressing the hidden contradictions beneath in the defense of established but unacknowledged interests and their enslaving pattern.

So much for Marx's concept of the State. Let us now consider what is a further dimension of the "superstructure" for Marx, when he employs this term in its most permissive sense: consider, that is, ideology.



## CHAPTER V

### IDEOLOGY

As with several other of his central categories, Marx's concept of "ideology" has given rise over the years to a veritable mob of objections and distortions. A common interpretation, for example, has mistakenly equated the term to mental activity as such and then concluded from this an apparent major paradox in Marx's theory: namely, that while ideology is said -- as a part of the "superstructure" in its largest sense -- to be a mere "reflex" of the material mode of production, it must also be in its practical-scientific form a prime condition and constituent of the latter (inasmuch as productive forces necessarily involve the ideas of practical science in their construction and operation). But surely, this objection reasons, ideology cannot be both mere reflex and prime condition/constituent of the same thing.

Then, again, a not unrelated interpretation has construed Marx's notion of ideology as equivalent to "belief(s)" and, from this, criticized the notion in question on the issue of the separation of and relationship between belief and action in principle (e.g. Alistair MacIntyre) and in the historical past (e.g. Max Weber): the former holding that the two cannot, as a matter of principle, be

considered as separate phenomena (i.e. belief "consists in" acting a certain way); and the latter that certain forms of belief, as a matter of historical fact, have given rise to the economic form of capitalism and not merely "reflected" it.<sup>1</sup>

What I shall attempt to show here, however, is that Marx had a much more limited notion of ideology than mental activity or beliefs as such. Once this is shown, such criticisms as those referred to above will be seen as inapplicable and/or irrelevant to his concept.

Marx's concept of "ideology" first leaps to prominence in his work in The German Ideology, written with Engels in 1845-46 as an attack on then ascendant German Idealist tradition. From the outset, ideology is conceived not as mental activity or belief per se but as Marx and Engels make evident in the opening sentence of their work, "men's conceptions of themselves": that is, men's various articulated forms of social self-consciousness -- from religious to

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<sup>1</sup>See MacIntyre's "A Mistake About Causality in Social Science", Philosophy, Politics and Society, ed., Peter Laslett and W.G. Runciman (Oxford: 1967), pp 48-70; and Max Weber's classic The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (London: 1968) p. 75. Weber seems to include in his concept of belief not only -- as is well known -- certain religious ideas, but also ideas involving the "rational organization of labour" (p. 160): which ideas are with Marx subsumed under forces of production. Then too Weber seems to want to subsume "ability and initiative" (p. 179) and "purely mundane passions" (p. 182) under his concept of ideology when these are not, of course, ideas at all. In short, Weber's concept of ideology seems from the start importantly different from Marx's, and hence what he shows about ideology is not likely to disprove what Marx held about ideology: they are simply talking about different referents, as the following exposition of Marx's concept will make clear.

economic, from moral and aesthetic to legal-political. This same, strictly delineated concept of ideology -- not at all ideas or beliefs as such, but only special superstructural conceptions of human matters or affairs from one or other perspective -- obtains throughout Marx's work without exception. Thus in his famous Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, he says:

In considering such [revolutionary] transformations, the distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production which can be established with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophical -- in short, ideological -- forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself so we cannot judge of such a period by its own consciousness [i.e. what it thinks of itself].

And thus, in his The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (p. 38), he says in a focal discussion of ideology:

And as in private life one differentiates between what a man thinks and says of himself and what he really is and does, so in historical struggles one must distinguish still more the phrases and fancies of parties from their real organism and their real interests, their conceptions of themselves from their reality.

As Marx makes clear above, his concept of ideology is closely akin to our every day concept of "rationalization", only in his case the articulation and referrent of such rationalization is social rather than "private" or individual (as I shall presently emphasize).

Now such public conceptions that men have about themselves are obviously distinct from the technological ideas used to make material use-values (which ideas explicitly belong, as I've already pointed out in Chapter II, to the domain of the forces of production in Marx's theoretical framework); from, relatedly, the ideas men have



of things other than themselves (thus "natural science" is explicitly excluded from consideration in a note in the first section of The German Ideology, p. 28);<sup>2</sup> and even from men's beliefs about themselves (one of the prominent qualities of much of the ideology which Marx discusses is its deliberate deceitfulness: thus in these cases not expressive of "beliefs" at all, but of intentions to deceive).<sup>3</sup>

The referent we are dealing with in Marx's notion of ideology is certainly not, in short, the all-inclusive range of cognitive phenomena that so many of Marx's interpretators have held.

(This important limitation in the referential range of ideology should not be construed as necessarily a downgrading of its status as a sociohistorical factor. On the contrary, ideology's existence as

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<sup>2</sup>Marx seems to have presumed -- partly because of a typical nineteenth century faith in the authority of "Natural Science" and partly because of its apparent methodological insulation from human affairs -- that the physical and biological sciences are free from the distortions informing ideology, even though the ruling-class control of this sphere of published ideation would seem no less strict than other areas of published thought to which he attended. I suspect it would be plausible however for Marxian theory to hold that these sciences by virtue of their ruling-class control have also been typically shot through with slantings corresponding to the requirements of the established social order -- not only in category, but in assumptions, methods, inferences and functions.

... to this direction of inquiry.

<sup>3</sup>The public conceptions of ideology cannot, of course, ever be properly said to be beliefs: they might, on those occasions when they are not deceitful, be said to express beliefs (or, indeed, cause them to arise), but they can never themselves be properly counted as beliefs. Otherwise put, belief is an "interior" word, ideology an "exterior" word. For MacIntyre and others to talk about beliefs as all or even part of ideology is, accordingly, akin to a category mistake.



the body of public self-conceptions renders it a kind of official currency of self-consciousness to which most or all other forms of cognition -- private included (e.g. see 18thB, 37) -- are likely to conform in one way or another, because man is a "social animal". Indeed Marx sometimes loosely talks of "consciousness", with no qualifier, as being "determined" in the strict manner that the narrower realm of ideology is determined, and this occasional conflation has given rise to the mistake that he equates man's consciousness as such with ideology (and thereby holds a tendentious philosophical position about the determination of ideas in general). But Marx makes it clear by all the instances of ideology which he considers that it is not man's consciousness as such to which he is referring with this concept but to its public modes:<sup>4</sup> though, I repeat, he still regards these public modes -- whether the arcane philosophical publications of the German Idealists or the contents of the popular press -- as standard forms of human self apprehension in any society and, as such, pervasively influential).

Now we have seen that Marx's concept of ideology is importantly limited in its referential range -- not only with human (as opposed to non-human) subject matter but with respect to, in addition, its public mode of existence -- we can schematize (with some proper but significant inference) these and other discernments into a hitherto

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<sup>4</sup>For Marx's view of the determining influences on "consciousness as such", see my exposition, "Human Nature as Historically Modified", in Chapter I.

undisclosed set of criteria of ideology:

- 1) It is constituted of formulated ideas (as opposed to remaining merely on a subconscious, racial memory, feeling, spiritual, etc. level).<sup>5</sup>
- 2) It refers to human matters or affairs (as opposed to non-human or natural phenomena).
- 3) All of its content is materially unproductive (as opposed to being usable, in whole or part, to make material use-value: as some ideas which satisfy criteria (1) and (2) -- for example, medical science -- would seem normally to be).
- 4) It obtains in a public mode, such as any form of publication or public speech (as opposed to a private mode, such as personal reflection, conversation or letter which occurs outside legal/political jurisdiction).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Formulated ideas could include more than linguistically formulated ideas, but Marx does not ever consider any further domain (e.g. visual or musical arts) in his discussions of ideological forms.

<sup>6</sup>i) Otherwise put, ideology is constituted only of ideas that have reached the public stage. I suggest this alternative construction because -- as my exposition will presently emphasize -- Marx employs an implicit dramaturgical model throughout his work in his description of ideological phenomena. Just as the legal and political superstructure is implicitly construed by him in terms of stage performance, so ideology is similarly construed by him as stage speech. The composite is the "world-historical drama" -- sometimes "tragedy" and sometimes "farce". Hence Marx's recurrent words for the superstructural realm -- "illusion" and "pretence". Possibly the best way of catching the picture Marx is trying to present of the relationship between economic base and superstructure (in the largest sense) is thus, to conceive of the former as man's material interests and the latter as these interests being, as it were, played out on the public platform to the audience and spectators of society's members as a whole. (One almost wonders whether Marx himself, with his great emphasis on superstructural mediation cont'd

- 5) (From (4)) It has received direct or indirect state sanction, by virtue of the formal approval of some sort (e.g. license, or permit) required from the state for any public mode to ideate (whether publishing firm, official document agency, church, school, assembly or whatever).<sup>7</sup> For anything to count as ideology, it must meet all five of these criteria.

The last criterion here -- (5) -- is of particular significance inasmuch as it explains Marx's famous insistence that the ideology of a

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of efforts to alter the economic base, isn't drawn into this very realm of "acting" he seems otherwise so aware of).

ii) It might be argued against criterion (4) here that such words of Marx's as "fancies" and "thinks" used in connection with the realm of ideology militate against my interpretation of Marx's concept of ideology as only those ideas which have been some way or other published. In an earlier writing of this section I deferred to this consideration by stipulating in criterion (4) only that ideological phenomena are at some time or other published, hence permitting ideas to count as ideology which are not in a public mode but have been so in the past. The reasons I now restrict in my interpretation the referential domain of ideology to be published ideas ut sic are first and most important, all instances of ideology which Marx reports or treats are (so far as I can see) of this sort and only this sort; second, the words which seem to suggest otherwise -- e.g. "fancies" and "thinks" -- do not necessarily so suggest (i.e. one can properly use such words in referring to published material: their use does not at all entail their referent obtaining 'in the head' alone); third, ideology's "correspondence" with the economic base makes best sense under this strict interpretation (as will emerge more clearly in subsequent discussion); and fourth, Marx's subject matter is social phenomena, and ideology construed exclusively as socially expressed (i.e. published) ideas most clearly complies with the limits of such a subject matter.

<sup>7</sup>This final criterion of ideology, yielded by criterion (4), indicates the unnecessary muddle traditional interpretation of Marx's work has gotten into with respect to construing the relationship Marx postulates between the economic base and ideology as an epistemological stance. It is no such thing. The economic base for Marx determines ideology by virtue of (inter alia) state control of the latter's modes of expression -- a political fact for Marx, not a general principle of knowledge as such.



society is the ideology of its ruling-class. The latter after all are held to control the State as their agency of collective self-protection: hence inasmuch as ideology qua obtaining in a public mode must receive (if only often indirectly) this state sanction, it must thereby be approved by a ruling-class agency. Its necessary mechanism of presentation is not only economically tied to the ruling-class, but superstructurally tied as well: as Marx himself knew well from his personal experience at the hands of state censors (i.e. direct state control of ideology) and at the hands of publishers afraid to publish his work for fear of official repression (i.e. indirect state control of ideology). Hence that the ideology of a society is said by Marx to be the ideology of its ruling-class is not at all the philosophically problematic claim it is often made out to be -- for example, a claim about the nature and causation of ideas in general which is subject to weaknesses of a general epistemological sort -- but a plausible empirical claim about how ideas that reach the public stage are in fact subject to effective control by established social power, state as well as economic (see Chapter VIII, Economic Determinism).

Now these five criteria of ideology in the Marxian sense are not, as I have already suggested, all explicitly stated by Marx. But they are all one way or another implied by him, and there is so far as I know no instance of ideology which he treats -- of the countless examples spread through his work -- which do not in fact satisfy each and all of these criteria. So Marx's concept is a far



more tightly drawn one than is generally realized. Indeed recognition of the strict limits to the sense of his concept has not to my knowledge received any attention before, as the whole tradition of treatment of his notion of ideology makes clear in its strictly speaking irrelevant objections (by critics) and crude advocacy (by Marxists).

Yet though Marx's concept of ideology denotes a much more restricted domain than is conventionally held, it must not be thought that the concept in question thereby loses its referential power. It still clearly includes within its ambit of reference the entire realm of mass media, school, church, academic, legal, political, aesthetic and all other forms of public communication: and, as such, informs the private sphere of ideas with its content more or less exhaustively, depending on the extent to which particular individuals are influenced by the public realm (i.e. pretty much). What remains over, outside of this domain, Marx may have properly regarded -- its being merely personal ideation -- as not warranting separate consideration as a sociohistorical influence.

Though we now seem possessed of a firmly delimiting set of criteria of Marx's notion of ideology, a very important issue remains unexplored. That is, throughout his work, essentially with regard to the theories of political economists, Marx draws the distinction between scientific and unscientific conceptions of human affairs (e.g. between "classical" and "vulgar" Political Economy). Even though in these cases, the works in question seem alike to satisfy the criteria of ideology as I have so far characterized them, their

difference to Marx is so substantive that a case has sometimes been made for cardinalizing their difference by classifying only un-scientific thought as ideological. If this line of interpretation is followed, then still another mark of ideology must be that it is "unscientific" (in another sense than already implied by the criteria outlined so far). By this additional criterion, then "classical" Political Economy and other "truly scientific" theory -- especially Marx's theory itself -- would count as non-ideological.

Though there is evidence of a sort to recommend such an interpretation -- Marx's generally pejorative use of the term "ideology", for example -- I am not going to accept it as decisive. Rather I am going to interpret Marx as regarding scientific and unscientific conceptions of human affairs as distinct subclasses of ideology. My main reason for doing this is, first, that only in this way can scientific conceptions of human affairs be clearly subsumed by his general model of sociohistorical explanation; and, second, that one may only suppose from his persistent talk of ideological struggle in his own day that he counted "scientific socialism" as part of the struggle. Granting then that Marx's notion of ideology does as a matter of theoretical adequacy and consistency extend to scientific as well as unscientific formulations, we might now ask what criterion or criteria he employs to distinguish these subclasses of ideology. If we are to understand the full complexity and import of his concept, this substantive distinction -- which is basic to his harshly critical attitude towards almost all ideology (i.e.

ideology which is unscientific) -- must be elucidated.

Unfortunately, Marx never makes a general distinction between scientific and unscientific conceptions which men have about themselves, but only makes a specific distinction with respect to his most abiding concern, the conceptions of Political Economy. But I think we may extend without distortion the principle he proffers here to historical, legal and all other ideological conceptions. What he says in this regard -- that is, with regard to Political Economy -- is this: that scientific Political Economy "investigates the real relations of production" (i.e. the effective ownership relations) in a society; whereas unscientific Political Economy does not investigate such relations, but ignores or conceals them. In his own words:

Once for all, I may here state, that by classical Political Economy, I understand that economy which, since the time of W. Petty, has investigated the real relations of production in bourgeois society, in contra-distinction to vulgar economy, which deals with appearances only -- (CI, 82).

Thus for Marx the work of David Ricardo, who "consciously makes the antagonism of class interests -- the starting point of his investigations" (CI, 14), belongs to the sphere of science; whereas the work of most political economists after 1830 which conceals or distorts or ignores these "real relations of production" (e.g. by representing the bourgeois economy as a harmony of freely choosing subjects) is not scientific, but merely "superficial", "trite" or -- at worst -- embodies "bad conscience and the evil intent of apologetic" (CI, 14). To render Marx's distinction here more general and systematic, we might say that any conceptions of human affairs which attend to the economic

"essence" of the latter in the following respects are scientific;

whereas any conceptions which do not so attend are unscientific:

- 1) the real relations of production (i.e. effective relations of ownership to society's forces of production)
- 2) the division into objectively antagonistic classes of these relations of production (i.e. generally, monopoly ownership of the means of production by a minority of society (the "ruling-class") and little or no such ownership by the rest of society (the "working class")).
- 3) the laws of exchange between these classes (i.e. generally, laws such that the class that has an ownership monopoly is able to extract from the other class or classes unpaid labour).

(Presumably, conceptions of human affairs which attend to these related facts of effective ownership, class division and laws of exchange would count as scientific for Marx even if the precise classes and laws of exchange discerned were -- assuming accurate data -- not the same as those perceived by himself. Otherwise, of course, Marx's distinction between scientific and unscientific ideology would be subverted by his own unscientific assumption of infallibility: not altogether an impossible assumption on his part, I must acknowledge).

Now certainly Marx's conceptions of human affairs is not wholly confined to these considerations alone. He also insists in various places on the classical scientific canon of empirical method (as in his assaults on continental Idealism of all sorts); on the indispensability of a dialectical approach to human affairs (as in his repeated



repudiation of those who -- like the otherwise scientific Ricardo -- ignore the universal principle of "negation" or change in their conceptions of the social formation in which they live as an "eternal" and "god-given necessity" (CI, 14)); on the necessity of "freedom from bias" (PofP, 19) -- which, by the way, he saw the working class, as opposed to the ruling-class and its "hired prize fighter" ideologists, as specially capable of by virtue of its membership's ownership of a few or no material interests to distort their vision; and on the theoretical imperative of explanatory adequacy (as in his almost life-long obsession with full explanation of the source of profits which previous economists -- scientific or not -- had, in his view, failed to provide). Nevertheless, when it comes to the question of distinguishing in ideology the scientific from the unscientific, Marx's most basic concern seems to be with whether or not the conceptions in question attend to the economic "essence" of all historical society -- its relations of production, class structure and laws of exchange. Indeed he often attributes failures in other areas to a more fundamental failure to investigate critically this underlying "essence". Thus, for example, political economists prior to him fail to achieve "explanatory adequacy" in their work in consequence of a more basic failure to apprehend the real relations of exchange between classes -- they find it "very dangerous to stir too deeply the burning question of the origin of surplus-value" (CI, 516). And thus, too, failures to pursue empirical method, to be "dialectical" and to be "free from bias" also seem for Marx to be outgrowths of a

more fundamental negligence with regard to apprehending the economic foundations of the society in which the ideologists in question live: they fail in these various respects, he insinuates repeatedly, because they are, on a deeper level, consciously or unconsciously afraid of examining critically the economic system which yields them the privilege of being ideologists in official favour rather than toiling producers anonymously oppressed. From this so to speak basic "sell-out", Marx implies, their other failures in scientific method derive. It is on this account, I think, that Marx is so deprecatory about ideology generally. For him, its characteristically (but not necessarily) unscientific nature seems ultimately grounded on cowardly self-interest.

With the exception then of certain modern formulations of social science -- "classical" Political Economy and his own theory, for example -- virtually all ideology for Marx is unscientific. (Needless to say, this view refers only to historical, class societies. In the future communist society which Marx projects, ideology -- so far as it exists -- will be neither scientific nor unscientific, but rather a-scientific inasmuch as there will be no economic classes to discern and relations of production and exchange will be, qua socially planned, plainly evident to all: the need for social science to penetrate beyond appearances "withering away" along with the state).<sup>8</sup> But Marx does not stop in his characterization of the mainstream of ideology with the attribute of "unscientific". Throughout his work, he alludes

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<sup>8</sup>See G.A. Cohen's "The Withering Away of Social Science" Philosophy and Public Affairs, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Winter 1972) pp. 182-203.

to further (non-necessary) properties of the ideological mainstream which render it systematically misleading or, to call upon a number of his own particular terms, "illusory", "upside-down", and, more directly put, "false". What is generally misleading about the various forms of ideology (and here the misleading formal content of the legal and political superstructure is recalled: See Chapter IV) are these related features:

1) The categories they involve are "empty generalities" rather than "determinate" and, as such, permit discourse to be "torn away from the facts" (GID, 53). For example, the contentless category of "Man as such" (familiar in the continental philosophy of Marx's day) detaches thought from "real, living, concrete individuals" in the here-and-now of the ongoing historical process or, more specifically, the indeterminate categories of "Freedom", "Equality" and "Rights" in capitalist society mask by their generality the distinctions in the real world between the "Freedom", "Equality" and "Rights" of individuals who own nothing but their labour-power and individuals who own the wealth to buy, among other things, this labour-power for their own profit (such "empty generality" of categories permitting for Marx as well, by the way, almost any signification whatever that might be convenient to ruling-class interests: see (3).

2) These same categories or ideas are not only "emancipated from the world" by virtue of their indeterminateness, but just as importantly are "transformed from predicates into subjects" (GID, 255), from general properties ascribed descriptively to the world to the self-subsistent



movers of the world (a Feuerbachian point, of course). For example, German Idealists believe "the real world is the product of the "ideal world" (GID, 24), Proudhon believes that economic categories precede and give rise to economic realities, adherents to religion imagine that the properties of a God they project rule human affairs as an omnipotent force, and bourgeois apologists ascribe to their conceptions of liberty, rights and law the magical role of independently operating authors of world-historical events.

3) The conceptions of ideology insofar as they are employed to refer to determinate social phenomena at all, are selectively employed so that they validate what promotes the vested order of human affairs and invalidate what challenges this order. For example, the conceptions which articulate an abhorrence of violence are generally applied in cases of people acting by force against established material interests (e.g. rebels or communists) and generally suspended in the far more frequent cases of people acting by force for established material interests (e.g. political officials, police forces and armies). Or, similarly, the conceptions which articulate a fondness for "Law", "Order", and "Property" figure very prominently in the ideology of a society when what's involved is the protection of the ruling-class's interests in these respects, but very weakly if at all, when what's involved is the ruled class's interests of the same sort (e.g. illegally oppressive working conditions, "anarchial" insecurity of employment, and expropriation of centuries-old "commons" land rights).

4) The conceptions of ideology, whatever their specific type, are



to some extent historically distorted in that the language they employ, the phenomena to which they refer and the viewpoints they embody are more or less tied to the past and, ipso facto, more or less inadequate to the present. For example, the ideology of the mid-nineteenth century French political struggle is permeated with "borrowed language", references to past circumstances and views of dead heroes from the French Revolution of 1789 (18thB, 10). Or, again, the ideology of maturely capitalistic England employs the phraseology of personal property, the circumstances of the yeoman past and the arguments of Locke to justify the monopoly holdings of the modern big bourgeoisie. "The tradition of all the dead generations", Marx says in one of his more allusive and poetic utterances, "weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living" (18thB, 10).

5) The conceptions of ideology generally tend to idealize human states of affairs by ascribing predicates to such affairs which "clothe" them in an inappropriately attractive guise. For example, the social positions which men hold by their superior command of material power are described as held from "divine sanction", "Social Contract" or "eternal necessity"; the material conditions into which men are born or forced are characterized as manufactured or chosen by acts of individual "will"; the untrammelled course of capitalist exploitation and accumulation is lyricized as "progress", "civilization" and "freedom"; and the successful securing of the economic interests of the ruling-class are celebrated as the victories of "mankind", "universal rights" or "the Absolute Spirit". The "aura", "intoxication"

and "glamour" of such phraseology gives rise, in Marx's view, to an opiated ideological dwelling place where the perpetual conquest of force and fraud ever yields the inverted and romantic picture of the best of all possible worlds.

Now these several characteristics of the ideological mainstream are not, as I have already suggested, necessary attributes of Ideology. Unlike the five criteria of ideology earlier outlined, they are simply common features of the phenomenon in question which Marx draws attention to in his many provocative ad hoc comments on various ideological forms. But they are nevertheless informed by one essential and unifying function: that is, all these attributes in one way or another obfuscate the real relations of production, class divisions and laws of exchange of the society in question, and thereby exemplify non-scientific ideology's principle of not attending to the economic "essence" of human affairs.

By virtue of this unifying function of obfuscation of the relations of production/Economic Structure, the role of mainstream ideology is in the end precisely the same in general import as that of the legal and political superstructure: that is, it forms part of the total "defense mechanism" whereby in Marx's account, the class divided economic base is maintained intact. What legal and political institutions do by organized coercion and appearance of sanctity, mainstream ideology does by various forms of "masking" in the realm of public ideas. Both sorts of phenomena contribute (in all but revolutionary or pre-revolutionary periods) to a single, embracing end -- protection of

the underlying economic order. They are both parts of the super-structure, in its largest sense; both defenders, in various ways, of the economic substructure, and indispensable as such to the latter's historical persistence; both dependent, in Marx's view, on the inherent antagonisms of this economic base for their existence; and both fated to "wither away" with the end of class divided relations of production in the communist utopia (ideology here becoming ideas as such: ceasing to be ideology by virtue of release from state control and the role of class "weapon").

Like legal and political phenomena then, ideological phenomena -- which are in a sense derived from the former inasmuch their public mode requires some sort of state sanction -- are in the main for Marx a defensive "reflex" to the exigencies of the underlying economic base rather than any sort of initiating influence. Indeed with Marx's concept of ideology, unlike belief, to which it has been conventionally but mistakenly assimilated, ideology's relationship is not so much to action but to inaction. None of the content of ideology can, by definition, be used to make a material use-value, is not therefore a productive force; and it is not normally a motivator of economic behaviour insofar as it is typically constructed by non-economic agents, formulated in other than material-interest terms, and expressed outside the sphere of commodity-exchange altogether. So ideology in Marx's sense -- to a large extent in principle -- is not positively related to productive nor even economic action. On the other hand, as public formulations sponsored by non-productive agencies living off

the society's surplus-value, Marx saw ideology as very much responsible for the inaction of society's members, namely with regard to altering their economic arrangements. For insofar as it is normally a "cloak", "disguise", "veil", "shroud" etc., of these arrangements, it blocks apprehension of their reality and, in this way, ensures their perpetuation (i.e. it is difficult to socially change what is not socially seen). So the explanatory force of ideology with Marx is for the most part with respect to men's refraining from a certain sort of action -- changing the economic substructure -- rather than to their undertaking this or any other sort of materially influential initiative. It is for Marx, as I indicated earlier, public rationalization of human matters and affairs and -- like private rationalization of private matters and affairs -- typically a shield by obfuscation of established patterns of behaviour. In this way, ideology accords neatly in general function with the legal and political aspects of the superstructure as a whole: that is, both it (public ideas) and the latter (public institutions) constitute an overall "defense mechanism" whereby the underlying class divided economic system of society is held in its established form. This is why, in general, Marx talks about the three realms in question -- economic, legal and political, and ideological -- as in "correspondence" with one another.

However just as the legal and political superstructure operates as an agency of action with respect to changing the production relations/ Economic Structure before or during periods of revolutionary upheaval (i.e. periods when the productive forces have "outgrown" their economic



"integument", and require a change in the latter to ensure their own preservation and development), so ideology too becomes such an agency in these exceptional times of epochal transition. Ideology, like law and politics, is always part of the "class struggle" -- its public consciousness side -- and in these abnormal periods of revolutionary unrest a rising, hitherto repressed class's attempt to "seize" its influence is simply the cognate in the realm of ideas of the struggle to capture State power. In these periods, the class-ruptured economic order ceases to be maintained intact and more or less "explodes" into open conflict by virtue of the superstructure as a whole being effectively claimed on all levels by a challenging class which in the past has been successfully kept from such superstructural levers of social power by the ruling-class's control of them. Hence, just as the State ceases to "hold" the economic base in its established pattern to the extent that a formerly repressed class seizes its reigns, so pari passu the ideology of the society in question ceases to exercise such a hold to the extent that its reigns are seized (e.g. by new and able critical conceptions of the social order in question -- for example, Marx's scientific theory itself -- which achieve the public mode status of ideology to the extent that new permission of State sanction is secured by the under class's struggle on the legal and political level). In short, the ideological aspect of the superstructure as a whole, like the institutional aspect, reverses its normal role of defense mechanism for the economic infrastructure in pre-revolutionary or revolutionary periods, and becomes a mobilizer with respect to altering the latter

rather than -- as in its typical function -- an immobilizer (and, as such, qualified for the status of knowledge in Marx's praxis epistemology -- unlike mainstream ideology which does not seem able, in principle, to so qualify). Here ideology can and does truly, if exceptionally, spring men into economic action -- its public formulations no longer merely the excuse, concealer, opiate of social rationalization, but penetrating to the secrets of the old economic system: as a sort of public self-recognition taking place in the final act of the historical drama of the ancien regime and resolving its conflicts into new, unwritten plot.

Of course for Marx it is only with scientific socialism that such "public self-recognition" which prefaces the death of the old order and the birth of the new may be properly regarded as being true self-recognition. For only here is the so to speak tragic flaw of all historical human society -- antagonistic class relations -- fully apprehended. As Marx poetically puts it in one of his early works: "Communism is the riddle of history solved, and knows itself to be this solution" (EPM, 102). In contrast to the revolutionary ideology of the seventeenth century bourgeoisie which masqueraded as such redemptive realization but in fact merely sanctified the tragic flaw of class-division in another form to which it remained blind in accordance with bourgeois class interests, scientific socialism is scientific and, as such, adequately comprehends this flaw in all its depths and grip. The final resolver on the plane of public consciousness of the tragic flaw of historical society is thus the scientific

ideology of Marxism which in the adequacy of its recognition spells the end of antagonistic class relations altogether. As in all classical tragic drama, its insight may indeed disclose to the stage's action the harbinger of bloody climax, but the new order whose dawn it signals is one purged by it of the hidden hamartia from which the travails of classical tragedy have always sprung.

(I extend my exposition of Marx into explicit dramaturgical model, here and elsewhere, not merely for explication flair -- though this is surely worthwhile -- but to suggest the intensely dramatic nature of his work. Marx was a great devotee of classical drama -- especially that of Aeschylus and Shakespeare -- and the sociohistorical conflicts and flaws and rhetoric he describes are imbued with its archetypal power. Indeed I sometimes wonder whether this as much as his scientific penetration and sweep is not responsible for the immense influence of his theory).

Well, given that Marx's concept of ideology like his concept of the State allows for a quite different function in pre-revolutionary or revolutionary periods than the merely "defense-mechanism" function of normal times, we might ask what is the nature of man's public self-conceptions in that communist utopia that succeeds the last, the proletarian revolution.

First of all, we know that such self-conceptions are no longer ideological inasmuch as there is no State by which their public mode must be sanctioned nor, relatedly, any class-divisions whereby an ascendant class controls the ideas in question as part of its mechanism

of rule. Man's social self-conceptions, thus, become literally disinterested (i.e. neither funded nor informed by class interest); and, as such, they neither obfuscate an antagonistic economic order -- as mainstream ideology -- nor penetrate behind such Schein -- as scientific ideology. All ideology disappears with the disappearance of class division: the former sort to the extent that there are no longer any social ruptures to conceal, and the latter sort to the extent that there is no longer "appearances" to penetrate behind. Man's economic relations, being communistic, cease to furnish the antagonistic material conditions required for either scientific or unscientific ideology to arise. At this point, man's intrinsic potentia of projective consciousness is liberated in the realm of social self-conception (as well as elsewhere) and the "chains of illusion" binding the Prometheus of humankind are, with his other chains, "sprung into the air". Ideology gives way, in brief, to the emancipated ideas of public self-knowledge.

However, the "chains of illusion" are not for Marx merely a matter of ideology, but run into the very frame of social consciousness: which hidden superstructural phenomenon -- hitherto missed in commentary on Marx -- we shall now consider.



## CHAPTER VI

### FORMS OF SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Unlike the other categories constituting what I have called "the structure of Marx's world-view", this final category, "forms of social consciousness" has little to go on in the way of textual grounding. That is, though Marx very often talks of "forms of consciousness" or, in his later texts, "forms of social consciousness", he usually does so in such a way as to justify its interpretative conflation with "ideology" or "ideological forms". Published commentary on Marx has usually if not always assumed an identity of sense here: counting the distinction in formulation as a mere difference of expression, and not sense. I myself assumed this until a typically provocative comment by Jerry Cohen that these were "not obviously the same" provoked a new consideration on my part that emerges here in the claim that "forms of social consciousness" is a distinct and general category, of signal importance: a germinal concept which suggests the outline of a sort of Marxian philosophy of social mind.

Now in claiming for this category of "forms of social consciousness" a distinct and general status in Marx's overall schema, I am relying on Marx's continual reference to it, as well as his

occasional distinction between it and "ideology": for example, his distinction in The German Ideology (38) between "morality, religion, metaphysics and all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of social consciousness."<sup>1</sup> Secondly, I am relying on the fact that the literal German here -- Bewusstseinsformen -- just cannot without distortion of the word, and the Kant-and-after philosophical tradition associated with the notion of "forms of consciousness", be held as synonymous with ideology. Such conflation just involves imperspicacious translation and grasp of philosophical history. Finally, I am influenced by the theoretical sense the distinction in question makes when introduced into Marx's general categorical framework: it raises no problems that I can see in the coherence in quality of Marx's overall model, yet it increases its explanatory range and adequacy interestingly and substantially.

Given then that ideology and forms of social consciousness are discrete categories, precisely how do they differ? To strike straight to the point, the former are explicit formulations whereas the latter are presupposed principles. The relation between these two, in turn, is such that the latter governs the former, as the underlying general principles of a bigot govern his specific statements. Consider for example, the particular statement "Columbus discovered America" and (I suggest) the presupposed general principle -- All human discernment is European -- underlying and governing this

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<sup>1</sup>See also pages 483 and 485 of Theories of Surplus Value, Part III.

statement. The former would qualify as a form of ideology in Marx's schema, whereas the latter would qualify as a form of social consciousness. With this concept of "forms of social consciousness" we have, in short, a sort of historical materialist variation on Kant's a priori forms of understanding.

The relationship of "forms of social consciousness" to the forces of production or economic base is, however, not different in substance from the relationship of ideology to these. The latter remain, for Marx, primary and determining (See Chapters VII and VIII). What is being suggested by the category in question is just another level or sphere of "correspondence" between a society's mode of production and the rest of its life: here, the presupposed principles or "forms" -- as opposed to ideological "expressions" or "products" -- of its social consciousness.

"Forms of social consciousness" and "Ideology" then are two aspects -- the governed manifest and the (secondarily) governing latent -- of published conceptions of human affairs. And though a society's ideology and forms of consciousness may be as a matter of fact at the same time the ideology and forms of consciousness of individuals belonging to this society, they are not necessarily or always so inculcated, and Marx makes no claim of this sort: as he himself suggests in his talk of the "private" realm, the latter is outside his domain of analysis, and figures as a sphere of comparison rather than of subsumption. All he is directly concerned with is consciousness that has achieved public exhibition of some sort or other:

whether one is considering this consciousness with respect to its "products" (ideology) or with respect to its presupposed principles of regulation ("forms").

Having outlined the general sense of Marx's category of "forms of social consciousness", I will seek to identify now what Marx -- by implication -- suggests these "forms" in fact are. Together these forms will constitute what one might call the "public frame of mind" of all historical societies or -- in Marx's language -- "forms of social consciousness in general":<sup>2</sup>

Let us consider, as I have suggested the "forms" in question as presupposed or assumed or given general principles to which publicly exhibited ideas -- of whatever sort or variety (excluding revolutionary) -- typically conform: whether or not these governing principles are discerned or, much more likely not discerned, by the ideological agents in question (Forms of social consciousness are like rules of grammar insofar as they may regulate what is expressed without those who are expressing knowing what they are, or even that they exist). To strike straight to the point, the "forms" or presupposed principles of this sort that Marx repeatedly implies as "in general" governing

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<sup>2</sup>I will not discuss "forms of social consciousness as historically modified" in Marx's schema inasmuch as my construction from Marx's work of this whole category is already tentative enough. Even what follows is almost entirely inferential. Though there are good grounds (as I have tried to show) for giving this category the status I have in Marx's general theoretical framework, he simply does not directly develop it beyond implicit postulation.



the manifold of ideological formulations are (my examples of ideological instantiation are drawn, more or less, from Marx):

- 1) The existing social order cannot be qualitatively altered  
(Thus it is ideologically represented as an "eternal necessity" which may possibly be made more internally consistent or "harmonious" but not itself changed).
- 2) The existing social order is morally good (Thus, in ideological formulation, it is described as bearing the attributes of some ethical entity -- "Divine Will", "Reason", "Justice", "Civilization", etc.)
- 3) What does not comply with the existing social order is blameworthy (Thus in ideology, social protest is depicted as "extremist", reformers as "agitators", foreign antagonists as "barbarous", non-compliance with authority as "violence", spokesman for the impoverished as "demagogues", etc.)
- 4) What promotes the social order is praiseworthy (Thus in ideology, undeviating submission to this order counts as "moral" and "high-minded", foreign conquest as "heroic" and "glorious", violent repression of opposition as "firmness" and "resolve", exercise of vested power over others as "duty" and "public service", passive acceptance of exploitation as "loyal" and "reliable", etc.)
- 5) Whatever rank is held by individuals in the social order represents their intrinsic worth (Thus in ideology, in successive epochs, slaves are held to be slaves "by nature", the privileged as privileged by "noble blood", the unemployed as unemployed by

"innate laziness", etc.)

- 6) The social order represents the interests of all in the society  
(Thus in ideological account, all citizens "will" it, "consent" to it, "benefit" from it or whatever -- the multi-form "Social Contract" postulate -- even if some of them "treacherously" or "irresponsibly" oppose it).
- 7) A part of a society (or a social organization) must always represent the whole of the society (or social organization)  
(Thus in ideology, a society without rulers or a workplace without a master is simply unintelligible or dangerous "chaos" and/or "anarchy").
- 8) The social property of the ruling-class is an independent, self-moving power (Thus in ideological formulation, the militarily held territory of the feudal lords is represented as "Landed Property" autonomously enjoining obligations and duties of all, the collective weapon of the ruling-class is represented as "the Law" or "the State" independently and impartially subjecting all citizens alike to its rule, the private capital of the big bourgeoisie is represented as self-governing subjecthood which of itself "produces profits", "creates jobs", "brings prosperity", etc.)
- 9) Ultimate social agency resides in a non-human entity (Thus in the ideology of various epochs ultimate responsibility for social phenomena is attributed to "Fate", "God", "Divine Plan", "Nature", "Fortune", "Gold", etc.)

Now a number of clarifying points should be made about these "forms of social consciousness in general":

a) They are obviously very intimately related (though not mutually entailable) -- that is why I have called them, together, a "frame". To use a crude metaphor, they are like the layers of a unitary (if inverting) lens: through which the objective phenomena of human society pass and are organized prior to this or that ideological formulation. (Consider Marx's notion of a camera obscura: GID, 37)

b) This "unitary lens" or "public frame of mind" which governs or organizes as an historically and socially developed a priori or "given" that which emerges ultimately in ideological formulations is not of course necessarily the "frame of mind" of individuals as such in the socceity, even if the individuals in question happen to be themselves ideological articulators. As I have emphasized several times, the ideas Marx is concerned with in "ideology" are only those ideas which achieve the social reality of public exhibition. As Marx's imagery repeatedly suggests, these are the ideas of the sociohistorical stage; and one may adopt the "public frame of mind" required of a speaker on this social "stage" without being committed anymore than any other hired performer to either it or the ideological expressions it emerges in as a private individual. It may be merely an in-role performance: and the histrionic aspect of ideology and corresponding forms of social consciousness is persistently stated or implied in Marx's descriptions. (Consider his recurrent imagery of "masks", "costumes", "chorus", "platform", etc., when talking of these



phenomena). However, it would be wrong to suppose that Marx considered or suggested that the various forms and expressions of thought of this public "drama" did not carry over into and impinge upon men's private mental lives. On the contrary, his massive emphasis on man as a "social animal", on man as a being whose consciousness derives from his "social being" and "social relations" urges the conclusion that ideology and forms of social consciousness are extremely influential in the formation of individuals' own cognitive lives (see, for example, 18thB, 37). Such ideas and forms of public judgement would seem to comprise for Marx the socially accepted standards of ideation in any historical society into which personal consciousness more or less resolves itself as the price of social existence. It is in this way, among others earlier described, that the individual's consciousness becomes a "social product". Thus individuals, as a matter of fact, take on the various roles, postures and lines of this public stage as their own -- so that what exists in principle only in the realm of official superstructure comes more or less simultaneously to obtain contingently in individuals' own minds (what we today might call "brain washing"). At this point, social "self-deception" (Marx's own phrase, 18thB, 11) becomes individual "self-deception" and the important distinction in principle is conflated in fact ("all the world's a stage" to cite the insight of one great ideologist). This is why Marx is so often anxious to "drum into people's heads" his revolutionary mode of thought. He is trying literally to break the hold that ruling-class ideology and its governing forms of social



consciousness have on the minds of their individual working class victims and the latter's various representatives. His recurrent phraseology of "shattering illusions", it seems clear, most aptly applies to the ensconced forms of public consciousness and it is these forms, with their "carry-over" effect on individual consciousness, that perhaps more than ideological formulations themselves Marx is concerned to challenge and usurp. More basically (i.e. structurally) than anything else in the realm of consciousness, they allow for the identification of the individual with the ruling-class social order within which he lives, an identification that can and does approach the level of "organic", to invoke Nino Gramsci's term. Through such "forms of social consciousness" becoming part of the cognitive equipment of the individual himself (on the public "stage" or not), the remarkable possibility of one who is objectively being exploited by the social order comprehending the persistence of the latter as really in his interests achieves actuality. A servility of very mind structure is accomplished (e.g. "The advance of capitalist production develops a working class, which by education, tradition, habit looks upon the conditions of that mode of production as self-evident laws of nature" CI, 737) which accounts, I think, most of all for the sheer invasive brutality of Marx's polemic: he is struggling as it were, against the ruling-class framework as it has gotten into people's heads, against the mechanics of public illusion as they have been adopted as the individual's own.

c) The "forms of social consciousness" are a social unconscious

insofar as they are not recognized but govern ideology as an undiscerned set of regulative principles. Since little or no ideology, certainly little or no ideology that Marx talks about (excepting his own theory), does in fact formulate these principles but is merely governed by them, it can be safely inferred that these forms of social consciousness obtain for Marx more or less unconsciously. The reach thereby of Marx's overall model into the domain of the unconscious -- a reach that is permitted by construing as we have "forms of social consciousness" as a category distinct from, and in addition to, ideology -- deserves pause. For not only does it extend the referential range of Marx's world-view into an extremely significant (and generally unsuspected) realm, but it indicates a certain common ground with that other central theory of human affairs which is associated with the name of Freud.

d) The term a priori as applied to "forms of social consciousness" is, as I've already suggested, only similar to the term of the Kantian tradition with respect to these forms governing consciousness as a given existing prior to this or that concrete judgement. It is not at all meant to imply the socially independent and logically necessary regulation of understanding that Kant's a priori does. The forms of social consciousness are (relatedly):

i socially acquired

ii historically grounded (how great a role history plays in the

determining of these forms is indicated by Marx's poetic declaration that the "weight of all the dead generations weighs like

a nightmare on the brain of the living" 18thB, 10)

iii applicable in principle (though not in fact) only to the public realm of ideas

iv general but not absolute in their government (Marx's scientific ideology, for example, is not governed by them and the rest of ideological formulations vary in the stringency of their obedience according to the permissiveness of the specific historical conditions in question)

v defeasible both in their particular historical form (e.g. feudal "forms of social consciousness" giving way to capitalist "forms of social consciousness") and (presumably) as a general mechanism governing public conceptions of human affairs (e.g. the emancipated consciousness of the classless communist utopia): defeasible, that is, both in part and in whole

e) The same forms of social consciousness, -- even assuming thoroughgoing stringency of government -- may tolerate very different ideological formations: depending on the "historical circumstances" of the ideological phenomenon in question. Indeed even with respect to the same class at the same time over the same issue, no uniformity of ideological formulation or anything like it is being suggested -- just that such formulations are generally governed by these several principles. The same grammar after all -- and forms of social consciousness are not nearly so exhaustive in their governance as a grammar -- permits an infinite variety of language expressions.

f) It is worth noting, finally, that the forms of social consciousness



as I have characterized them are neatly consistent with, and even explanatory of, the various common characteristics of ideology I outlined in the previous section. That, for example, ideological formulations (e.g. those articulating an abhorrence of violence) are "selectively applied" corresponds nicely with the forms of social consciousness which presuppose what violates, or promotes, the social order as morally bad, or good, respectively (i.e. which govern the selective application which takes place). Or, again, more generally, that mainstream ideology is systematically misleading is at least partly explained by the fact that it is regulated by forms of social consciousness which are each and all petitio principii. Forms of social consciousness and mainstream ideology in the Marxian schema seem, in short, as his language suggests, related as deluding (governing) form and deluding (governed) content in the domain of public conceptions of human affairs.

As far as the relationship between forms of social consciousness and the other categories of phenomena constituting Marx's general theoretical framework it would seem that the former cohere neatly not only with ideology (as indicated above) and thus the superstructure as a whole and the economic base (like the rest of the former, they "correspond" with the latter, i.e. obtain in such a way as to maintain it intact); but also with Marx's notion of the capacity for projective consciousness of human nature as well. That is, the forms of social consciousness would appear to be part of the social mechanism -- described in Chapter I -- "restraining the compass" of the former's



"functionable range": limiting such "functionable range" of consciousness by virtue of the established "public frame of mind" they comprise. For example, the limit earlier described in Section I (p. 20) as restraining Aristotle's thought from conceiving of the labour theory of value -- the limit imposed by, Marx says, the economic conditions of slavery of Greek society -- would seem erected in part by the existence of certain forms of social consciousness obtaining as a sort of mediating influence between the production relations/Economic Structure and the human natural capacity of creative intelligence: hence, Marx's talk in this place of the necessity of the notion of human equality achieving the "fixity of a popular prejudice" (i.e. form of social consciousness) before Aristotle or anyone else can "decipher the secret of the expression of value."<sup>3</sup> Here, it seems, Marx is indicating a middle link role for the forms of social consciousness between the economic infrastructure and man's essential cognitive

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<sup>3</sup>Lest it be thought that the notion of human equality (even it owns the "fixity of popular pre-judice") cannot, by reason of consistency, be properly considered as a "form of social consciousness" as I have identified these forms, I suggest that it be considered as an historical modulation of the very form of social consciousness ((5) in my catalogue) that it seems to violate. Under this view, the form in question -- "whatever rank is held by individuals within the social order represents their intrinsic worth" -- easily accomodates the notion of human equality insofar as the equality involved here is merely equality of right before the law (which equality is, of course, perfectly consistent with radical inequality of rank in other respects). Indeed, such a notion of equality before the law may in certain contexts be a necessary condition of intelligible ranking, in the way that equality before the track rules is a necessary condition of intelligibly ranking runners in a race.

potentia: a role in which the compass beyond which the latter does not go is proximately determined by the frame which the first together constitute -- between, that is, limits upon the most rudimentary factor of Marx's general theoretical framework (human nature) and limiting by the final component of superstructure (forms of social consciousness). The so to say "bottom" and "top" categories of Marx's model thereby connect into implicit relationship, showing the way to a richer interrelationship in Marx's framework than perhaps even he himself was explicitly aware of.

In summary then, "forms of social consciousness" in Marx's schema constitute a still further superstructural "hold" maintaining -- as the rest of the superstructure in its largest sense -- the economic base intact. As the underlying principles governing public conceptions of human affairs or ideology, they bind the Prometheus of humankind on yet another, unseen level: the "public frame of mind" to which individual consciousness as a matter of fact generally conforms and within which in any historical society, man's essential power of projective consciousness seems likewise confined. The forms of social consciousness are, in brief, as Marx's discussion of Aristotle and the labour theory of value suggest, the machinery of fixed public prejudice regulating ideas as an unseen grammar of ideological propriety, as a set of undiscerned rules of acceptable formulation on the public stage. Or, otherwise put, they are the underlying cognitive mechanism of historical illusion: the implied underpinnings of Marx's special answer to the ancient Appearance-Reality problem.

CHAPTER VII  
ECONOMIC DETERMINISM<sup>1</sup>

1.

Perhaps no doctrine in our intellectual history has received more attention -- critical, puzzled and celebrative -- than that of "economic determinism". To adequately catalogue the literature on Karl Marx's epoch-making theory would require, no doubt, a considerable tome.<sup>2</sup>

I am not, therefore, going to attempt such a task here, illuminating though it might be as a study in the history and sociology of ideas. Rather I am going to outline an interpretation which will -- if I am successful -- be both faithful to Marx's texts and immune to the standard philosophical criticisms which have been

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<sup>1</sup>This chapter is a direct reprint of my article "Making Sense of Economic Determinism", Canadian Journal of Philosophy, Vol. III, No. 2 (December 1973) 249-61. I regret any intrusive repetition or in\_elegance which such direct reprint may involve.

<sup>2</sup>Marx never himself employed the specific formulation "economic determinism"; but he talks so persistently through his mature work of the "economic structure" "economic base" and "economic form" in relationship to other factors of the sociohistorical process such that it "determines" ("bestimmt" or "bedingt") them that this label seems clearly apposite.

hitherto advanced against the theory (e.g. that it is intolerably imprecise,<sup>3</sup> that it is indefensibly monocausal,<sup>4</sup> that it is refuted by historical fact,<sup>5</sup> that it is committed to logically improper prediction,<sup>6</sup> that it is incompatible with ethical and personal responsibility,<sup>7</sup> etc.). My hope also is that the account that I give of Marx's position on economic determinism will clarify several of his fundal categories (e.g. "relations of production" and "super-structure") which have hitherto remained murky and, hence, specially provocative to the philosopher.

As well, my interpretation will be quite unlike what has been offered in defence of Marx in the century which has passed since his publication of Capital: for example, Friedrich Engels' interpretation,

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<sup>3</sup>H.B. Acton (*Illusion of the Epoch* (London: 1955), p. 271) condemns Marx's entire theory as "a philosophical farrago;" Sidney Hook (*Marx and the Marxists* (N.Y.: 1955), p. 35) advises "Rigorous examination is one thing Marx's ideas will not stand;" and so forth.

<sup>4</sup>This is a claim advanced by Western social scientists generally: for example, R.M. MacIver and Charles H. Page in *Society: An Introductory Analysis* (Toronto: 1965) p. 563.

<sup>5</sup>This sort of criticism has achieved the universality of a conventional wisdom.

<sup>6</sup>This is Karl Popper's central point in *The Poverty of Historicism* (London: 1961), especially pp. v-vii.

<sup>7</sup>Isaiah Berlin articulates the most famous version of this argument in *Historical Inevitability* (London: 1957) passim.



which holds sway among orthodox Marxists to this day.<sup>8</sup>

2.

The essential framework of Marx's theory of history and society is constituted by the following categories:<sup>9</sup>

- (A) Human Nature (i "in general", ii "as modified in each historical epoch")<sup>10</sup>
- (B) Forces of Production
- (C) Relations of Production (whose "totality ..... constitutes the Economic Structure")
- (D) Legal and Political Superstructures
- (E) Ideology
- (F) Forms of Social Consciousness

(A) is an arguable inclusion. Many commentators on Marx would say that he completely excluded such a category from his theoretical framework after 1845. Though I am confident this view can be shown to be mistaken, the issue deserves a more thorough

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<sup>8</sup>Engel's argument, given in his well-known letter to J. Bloch in 1890 (Marx and Engels, Selected Correspondence (Moscow: 1953) pp. 498-500), is essentially that the "economic conditions" are "ultimately decisive", that they determine action "in the last resort." This, obviously, tells us very little.

<sup>9</sup>This theoretical framework is derived (with the exception of (A)) from Marx's celebrated Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy.

<sup>10</sup>Marx, Capital, Volume I (Moscow: 1965) p. 609.

investigation than can be afforded here. In any case, it has no importance to the argument of this paper.

Also, there might be some resistance from Marxian scholars on the distinction between (E) and (F). Though none of the argument of this paper depends on such a differentiation, I make it for two reasons. The first is that Marx makes it explicitly on at least one occasion himself.<sup>11</sup> The second is that I discern in the distinction fecund possibilities for eliciting from Marx a philosophy of mind, a theory of socially engendered forms of apprehension -- constituting what I would call an "interest frame" -- which stand to Ideology something like Kant's a priori subjectivity stands to concrete judgements. But I do not wish here to claim so much as to suggest, to seduce, further inquiry.

What concerns us in this paper though is (C) -- the Production Relations: or, speaking holistically, the Economic Structure. It is these which provide the focus of our inquiry. Before proceeding further, it is important to note that Productive Forces (e.g. tools, natural resources and human skills) are not strictly part of the Economic Structure, though they are often thought to be such.<sup>12</sup> For the Economic Structure is with Marx a "totality of relations",

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<sup>11</sup>The German Ideology (Moscow: 1964) p. 38. It is interesting to consider the relationship between Forms of Social Consciousness (F) and Human Nature as historically modified (A, ii).

<sup>12</sup>See, for example, C. Wright Mills' The Marxists (N.Y.: 1962) p. 103.

a "form", while the Productive Forces are simply one of the two factors connected by these relations, this form. Hence in any full description of the Economic Structure, all expressions and/or definite descriptions referring to the Productive Forces would be replaced by variables.<sup>13</sup> Marx himself seems to make clear this extrusion of the Productive Forces from the Economic Structure when he says such things as:

Machinery is no more an economic category than the bullock that drags the plough. Machinery is merely a Productive Force (my emphasis)<sup>14</sup>

All this is not, of course, to suggest that the Forces of Production are any the less important. As anyone who is familiar with Marx knows, they constitute for him the motor force of the sociohistorical process. They even "determine", but in a quite different way than the Productive Relations and/or Economic Structure.

Now having narrowed the conceptual field somewhat, we must characterize more exactly the Production Relations and, that which they as a totality constitute, the Economic Structure. When we have accomplished that task -- which is in itself a notoriously problematic undertaking -- we can proceed to the question of "economic determinism" as such.

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<sup>13</sup>I am indebted on this point to Gerald A. Cohen's article, "On Some Criticisms of Historical Materialism" (Aristotelian Society Supplementary, Volume XLIV, 1970).

<sup>14</sup>The Poverty of Philosophy, p. 116.

The Relations of Production, as H.B. Acton has pointed out, are apt to leave us in "the devil of confusion".<sup>15</sup> On the one hand they seem difficult to pry apart from the relations which are involved in technology per se: for example, the precisely ordered relations between men on an assembly-line which are constitutive of the assembly-line as an operable Force of Production. On the other hand, they are at least as difficult to pry apart from the legal superstructure or, speaking more specifically, the property relations of the legal superstructure: for Marx says in one of his most celebrated passages that "property relations" are but a "legal expression" of Relations of Production.<sup>16</sup>

The importance of these conceptual problems in Marx's theoretical framework should not be underestimated. They are prominent throughout his corpus and any attempt to solve them must, I think, venture beyond the texts somewhat. I shall feel free to take such license here, but not so as to violate in any way Marx's own claims. Any extensions will complement, not disturb.

First of all, let us clearly distinguish Forces of Production from Relations of Production. A Force of Production is anything which can be used to make a material use-value:<sup>17</sup> natural resources, tools,

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<sup>15</sup>Illusion of the Epoch, p. 162

<sup>16</sup> Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy, p. 67

<sup>17</sup> This definition is implicit in Marx's most thorough discussion of the Forces of Production in Capital, Volume I, p. 177ff.



labour-power (skilled and unskilled) and the materials which all these require to operate (e.g. food and dwelling as well as oil and fertilizer).<sup>18</sup> Now this characterization could certainly profit from further development, but such is not required for our present purposes. What does warrant our attention here is the place of technological relations in Forces of Production. They are, briefly, those relations which must obtain between the various resources, instruments and labour-powers of a productive system in order to set these forces into some sort of productive coherence. Such relations are as integral to the productive mechanism as, in the microcosm, linking and organizing mechanical parts are to a machine. Technological relations are, in short, wholly within the sphere of the Productive Forces and are necessitated by them.<sup>19</sup>

Relations of Production, on the other hand, are extra-technical relations akin to property relations: "property relations" being for Marx, as we have seen, just "a legal expression" for

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<sup>18</sup>That means of subsistence are Forces of Production is made clear in Capital, Volume I, p. 183, as well as Theories of Surplus Value Part I (Moscow: 1954) p. 378. As well, that which "trains, develops, maintains or reproduces labour-power itself" (*ibid*, p. 167) is considered a Force of Production: hence schools and hospitals, among other things, would seem to count as Forces of Production.

<sup>19</sup>One co-ordinated system of Productive Forces permits, of course, quite different inter-personal contents. For example, such a system may require labour-power x functioning with machine y for time  $t_1 \dots t_n$ : but whether such labour-power is provided by one man or men acting in turns, and whether it is self-directed or commanded are extra-technical matters determined by the Relations of Production.

## Relations of Production.

The difficulty with so distinguishing Relations of Production from Forces of Production is that we seem thereby to be pushed, as it were, from the frying pan into the fire. That is, we are now confronted with the problem of distinguishing Relations of Production from property relations which are part of the Legal Superstructure.

To advance straight to the point, the distinction lies here in the difference between power and right.<sup>20</sup> A Relation of Production is a relation of a person to a Force of Production such that he has the power to use or exploit it and exclude others from doing so, (what we will call "effective ownership").<sup>21</sup> A cognate property relation, in contrast, is a relation of a person to a Force of Production such that he has the right to use or exploit it and exclude others from doing so, (what we will call "legal title"). Now though the power and the right to so employ a Force of Production often and even usually coincide, frequently they do not. The army commander, the criminal chieftain, the upper bureaucrat, the religious leader, the political stringman, the monopolist, and so on may all own the power to use or exploit Forces of Production and exclude others from doing so, with no corresponding right. On the other hand,

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<sup>20</sup>For the most extended general discussion by Marx of the power-right distinction, see The German Ideology, p. 357ff, and p. 394ff.

<sup>21</sup>By the "power to exploit", I mean the power to derive non-self-produced benefit: such as rent, profit, director shares, upper-rank remuneration, sale mark-up etc.

the penniless, the conquered and intimidated, the legislatively deceived, and so on may all have the right to use or exploit Forces of Production and exclude others from doing so, with no corresponding power.<sup>22</sup> The two are quite distinct. Furthermore, it should be noted, even where legal property relations and Relations of Production do "coincide", this may well be a matter of right sanctioning power which has been or could be held independently of such sanction (e.g. as enforced custom).<sup>23</sup> This is an important point because it suggests a still more thoroughgoing distinction between property relations and Relations of Production.

### 3.

Having secured a definition of Relations of Production that pries these relations apart from technological relations (which belong to the Forces of Production) and cognate property relations (which belong to the Legal Superstructure), we can now identify the subject term of "economic determinism."

The totality of Relations of Production constitutes, we have seen, the Economic Structure. This Economic Structure, in turn, is what Marx sees as determining not only men's individual behaviour but society's Legal and Political Superstructures, Ideology and Forms

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<sup>22</sup>See, for example, The German Ideology, pp. 79-80.

<sup>23</sup>"Right", claims Marx (The Poverty of Philosophy, p. 75) "is only the recognition of fact".

of Social Consciousness as well.

For Marx, the essential and defining principle of the Economic Structure is its enduring ruling-class pattern: that is, the "effective ownership" of most of society's Forces of Production by a small part of that society (the ruling-class) and the effective ownership of few or none of society's Forces of Production by the large majority of that society (the labourers).<sup>24</sup> Exactly what Forces of Production are here involved (e.g. whether the arable land as in rural feudalism or the factories and machinery as in urban capitalism), who has effective ownership of them (e.g. whether hereditary lords or capitalists) and how such Relations of Production actually operate (e.g. whether by the economic laws of feudalism or capitalism) are questions to which the answers will provide a more determinate view of the Economic Structure under consideration.

The ruling-class pattern of the Economic Structure, however, whatever its specific form, renders the non-owning majority, the labourers dependent for their survival on the "small part of society who possess the monopoly of the means of production":<sup>25</sup> for the latter are the material resources whereby men stay alive. Thus the ruling-class are in the position through their "monopoly" of the Forces of Production to extract payment from the non-owning labourers

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<sup>24</sup>There are, of course people -- "petty" owners -- who are members neither of the ruling-class nor of the labouring class, and my wording permits this.

<sup>25</sup>Capital, Volume I, p. 235.



in exchange for allowing these latter those benefits from the Productive Forces which they require to continue living. This payment is in the case of productive workers surplus-labour on the ruling-class-owned Forces of Production above and beyond what is allocated to keep the labourers alive (which surplus-labour expresses itself in such historical forms as rent-in-kind or money profit). Thus, in one of his most definitive passages, Marx says:

The specific economic form, in which unpaid surplus-labour is pumped out of direct producers...the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers...reveals the inner-most secret, the hidden basis of the entire social structure."<sup>26</sup>

In the case of non-productive workers (e.g. state functionaries, personal servants, ideologists and other "parasites"), the payment is labour at service functions which directly or indirectly protect the ruling-class Economic Structure, but produce no material use-value.

(There are cases, of course, where the non-owners seek to avoid this exploitative arrangement and attempt to stay alive in some other manner: for example, by beggary, vagabondry or robbery. However Marx reports in detail in Capital the fate of those who have resorted to such a strategy: whipping, mutilation, slavery, deprivation of children, imprisonment and execution).<sup>27</sup>

The Economic Structure is in general then, for Marx, the

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<sup>26</sup>Capital, Volume III, p. 791.

<sup>27</sup>Capital, Volume I, p. 734ff.

enduring ruling-class pattern of the totality of the Relation of Production (i.e. a small minority of society effectively owns most of the Forces of Production and a large majority owns few or none of the Forces of Production): which ruling-class pattern always involves the ruling-class extracting surplus-labour (or service) from the non-owning labourers.

## 4.

Now, the general conceptual groundwork laid, we can suggest what Marx means by "economic determinism."

Before doing so, however, it is well to point out, against some well-known interpretations what Marx does not mean:

- 1) He is not saying that any of the non-economic phenomena is uniquely determined by the Economic Structure: the widespread tendency to read "uniquely determine" when Marx writes "determine" -- or, to be more exact, the German "bedingen" and "bestimmen" -- is one of the great banes of Marxology.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>The question might arise here, "Well, if Marx doesn't mean 'uniquely determine' by his notion of 'determine', then what does he mean?" In the next pages, I exhibit three specific uses of the concept by Marx, but I make no attempt to reduce these uses to any single sense. I might appeal to the later Wittgenstein in defence of this strategy and leave it at that. However, I think it is worth mentioning here that Marx's concept of "determine" is most often used in the interesting sense of "limit:" a sense which is familiar in the pre-twentieth century philosophical tradition and which is, as well, the original meaning of the Latin "determinare." (See p. 255ff for detailed discussion of this use). I might also point out here that such a use of "determine" is neatly consistent with Marx's concept of an economic form.

- 2) He does not mean by "ideology" those scientific principles and theories that are technically utilizable in maintaining or improving productive output: these are primary constituents of the Forces of Production and are everywhere recognized by Marx as such.
- 3) He is not saying that those phenomena which are determined by the Economic Structure are inefficacious in their relationship to the latter: throughout his work he draws attention to the great practical influence and indeed necessity of laws, politics, ideology etc., in maintaining the Economic Structure.

Still speaking generally, we may now say that the Economic Structure "determines" by virtue of these principles which define it.<sup>29</sup>

- 1) Effective ownership by a small minority of most of society's Forces of Production and effective ownership by a large majority of few or none of the Forces of Production is maintained intact: the proportion of the society who so control the means of life and the share they hold remaining constant, or becoming more monopolist still.
- 2) Surplus labour over and above the amount allocated to the

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<sup>29</sup>Of course, in any pre-revolutionary or revolutionary stage, the Economic Structure is in the process of dissolution and correspondingly ceases, thus, to exert determining force. What happens in such stages, according to Marx, is that men reorganize their constraining Economic Structure through political action, a reorganization that is made both possible and technically desirable by the growth of the Productive Forces beyond the limits of the Structure to accommodate them.

producers for their survival is extracted (by and to the advantage of (1)) from the latter by the ruling-class: the amount of such tribute labour remaining constant, or increasing.<sup>30</sup>

Strictly speaking, (1) constitutes the Economic Structure per se and (2) is its "law of motion."

Remaining on the general level,<sup>31</sup> we may now state how, for Marx, the operation of these principles of the Economic Structure determine individual behaviour, the Legal and Political Superstructure, Ideology and the Forms of Social Consciousness.

First of all they determine individual behaviour by:

- (a) compelling those who are without the Forces of Production they require to stay alive (the majority of society) to work and provide surplus-labour or service for others (those others being correspondingly compelled to follow their role of domination or sink to the same level).<sup>32</sup>
- (b) compelling those who work and provide surplus-labour or service for others in order to survive to pursue precisely and externally

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<sup>30</sup>Though the rate of profit in capitalist society declines, according to Marx, the mass of surplus labour grows (Capital, Volume III, p. 219).

<sup>31</sup>None of the specific laws of the capitalist Economic Structure will be treated here, though it is in their operation that many contemporary Marxists see the brunt of Marx's economic determinism (for example, French continental Marxists like Louis Althusser and Maurice Godelier).

<sup>32</sup>Compare Hegel's celebrated treatment of the Master-Slave relation in the Phenomenology.



stipulated forms of activity in their work: which external prescriptive control of the individual's working life, extending as it often does to most of the activities of his waking hours, is perhaps the strictest sort of determinism which the Economic Structure exerts (those who hold the power to so stipulate other men's activities being correspondingly compelled, again, to sustain their hegemony or sink to the same level).

(c) restricting those who are not members of the ruling-class within narrow limits in their non-work lives by virtue of:

- (i) placing severe non-technical consumer limits (e.g. by meagre wages) on what they may enjoy in the way of dwelling-place, food supply, culture goods, luxuries and so forth.
- (ii) excluding them from access to most of the natural and technological environment which is owned by the ruling-class.
- (iii) so confining them in their work lives by extended repetitive labour that the possibilities of their non-work lives are gravely curtailed (e.g. by virtue of exhaustion and mechanical habit).<sup>33</sup>

Secondly, the Economic Structure determines the Legal and Political Superstructures, the Ideology and the Forms of Social Consciousness by blocking or selecting out all such phenomena which

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<sup>33</sup>These constraining influences of the Economic Structure are reported by Marx throughout his corpus, especially in the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, The German Ideology and Capital, Volume I.

do not comply with it.<sup>34</sup> For example, a proposed law which guarantees an above poverty income to all citizens, a parliamentary party policy to expropriate without compensation economic monopolist holdings, a mass-media advocacy of the prohibition of unearned income, an educational technique (or drug) which alters public consciousness towards non-competitive outlook -- none of these will be permitted to survive in a capitalist society. Such and similar non-occurrences are firmly predictable.<sup>35</sup> They do not comply or "correspond" with the Economic Structure. They are "blocked" therefore from obtaining,

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<sup>34</sup>Marx consistently uses the German word "entsprechen" (meaning "correspond to" or "comply with") to describe the relationship between the Economic Structure and the Legal and Political Superstructures, the Ideology and the Forms of Social Consciousness. (e.g. in the Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, The Poverty of Philosophy (p. 95 and p. 160), Capital, Volume I (p. 82 and p. 372) Capital, Volume III (p. 791), etc. The implication is, as I argue, that what does not "correspond to" or "comply with" the Economic Structure is excluded.

<sup>35</sup>If one of these phenomena did occur, then the economic determinist principle, as I have applied it here, would be prima facie falsified. Such a falsification upon further investigation might lead to any of the following conclusions:

- (1) The Economic Structure of the society is in a state of dissolution: a revolutionary stage has been entered.
- (2) The phenomenon in question is, to use Marx's frequent term, "accidental": an exception to an otherwise firmly obtaining regularity.
- (3) The phenomenon in question does in fact "correspond" with the Economic Structure in a manner not yet evident.
- (4) The phenomenon in question, in company with other phenomena similarly recalcitrant, obtains and continues to obtain with no revolution ensuing: thus falsifying the principle of "economic determinism" as here applied.

or "selected out" before they can achieve effective hold.<sup>36</sup>

Marx's writings are full, from 1843 on, with descriptions of precisely this negative determinism.<sup>37</sup>

(Such "blocking" or "selecting out" of phenomena which do not comply with the Economic Structure is made possible by, essentially, the following conditions:

- (1) the supervisory prominence of ruling-class members in legal, political and ideological agencies.
- (2) the power of ruling-class members to provide and withdraw economic support from parliamentary, educational and mass-media personnel who are not members of the ruling-class.
- (3) the tendency of societies to sustain, simply as a matter of entrenched historical "habit", the Economic Structure which is already firmly established.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>One of Marx's favorite illustrations of this "blocking" phenomenon is nineteenth century Political Economy which always remains "within the bounds of the bourgeois horizon," "within a limited field of expression" (my emphases). Once the class antagonism of the Economic Structure becomes manifest, then these "bounds" are more restrictive than ever. "It was thenceforth no longer a question whether this theorem or that was true, but whether it was useful to capital or harmful, expedient or inexpedient, politically dangerous or not" (Capital, Volume I, p. 14-15).

<sup>37</sup>"Determinatio est Negatio", says Marx, echoing Spinoza (Ibid, p. 597).

<sup>38</sup>"The tradition of all the dead generations", says Marx in one of his more lyrical passages, "weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living" (The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, (Moscow: 1967) p. 10.

- (4) the logic of collective action which, insofar as legal, political and ideological activities are only collectively generatable, renders individual commission impossible).

It might well be thought here that the notion of "complying" or "corresponding" with the Economic Structure is too loose that, consequently, the precise extent of such economic determinism is not clear. This is true enough. But such a caveat tells as forcefully against Darwin's similar (but generally accepted) theory of Natural Selection: that "favourable species tend to be preserved and unfavourable ones to be destroyed".<sup>39</sup> Darwin never offers explicit criteria of what it is for a species to be "favourable" or "unfavourable" or, otherwise put, "fit" and "unfit" for natural survival. Similarly, Marx does not sponsor such criteria for what it is for a superstructural or ideological phenomena to be fit or unfit (i.e. compliant or uncompliant with the Economic Structure) for social survival. In each case, empirical inquiry into all the relevant concrete circumstances is required to mount a sound judgment of what in fact will be selected, or selected out, in the "struggle for life". Thus whereas Darwin might specifically claim that, say, the rhinoceros in the tundra will suffer extinction, (because the material succour it requires is lacking in such a natural environment), so Marx might specifically claim that a bill for worker

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<sup>39</sup>Marx, it is interesting to remember, wanted to dedicate Capital to Darwin, and Engels -- in his graveside speech on Marx -- compared the theories of the two men.



management of factories on the floor of British Parliament will suffer extinction (because the material "succour" it requires is lacking in such a social environment). Marx, as Darwin, would insist here and elsewhere on investigation of particular material conditions before he ever hazarded judgment on the precise extent to which his general principle held.

It might still be objected here that there are many possible refutations of Marx's principle that only that which "complies" or "corresponds" with the Economic Structure is permitted social survival. For instance -- I am casting about for the most persuasive local example which this sort of rejoinder might muster -- the Canadian volume White Niggers of America by Pierre Vallières was recently permitted publication and wide distribution in two languages in Canada, though it outrightly called for armed overthrow of the government and the uncompensated expropriation of all large-scale capitalist enterprises. Here, surely, a critic might claim, is a clear case of successful empirical rebuttal of Marx's economic-deterministic principle.

A convincing reply to such a counter might be this. First of all, the book itself was published by a large capitalist firm and earned substantial profits for the firm: reinforcing, thus, in this respect at least, the Economic Structure. Secondly, repression of its publication might ultimately have generated more challenges to the Economic Structure than it prevented and, therefore, been inimical in the end to the preservation of this structure. And finally, when circumstances arose such that this and similar literature did represent

a clearer threat to the Economic Structure than hitherto, a special and decisive superstructural step was taken -- invocation by the national government of the War Measures Act -- whereby all support of the cause it embraced was subject to indefinite detention (an executive move which permitted, among other things, the extended imprisonment of the book's author). In short, an examination of specific historical circumstances leads plausibly to the conclusion that the apparent refutation here of Marx's economic-determinist principle represents, in fact, a confirmation of it. Other such rebuttals might be similarly subverted.

We come to the third -- and perhaps most interesting -- sense in which the Economic Structure determines the Legal and Political Superstructure, Ideology and Forms of Social Consciousness. This sense of economic determinism complements the second sense discussed above. It refers to the mapping, so to speak, that takes place between a specific Economic Structure and the particular legal, political and ideological phenomena of a society. Marx gives no rules whereby such a "mapping" proceeds, but he frequently discusses, describes and alludes to cases of its occurrence. In this "mapping", definite economic-structural content is "projected" onto the superstructure, the ideology and public consciousness (which, in our account, have already been shown to be constrained within a "limited field" i.e. within bounds that comply with the Economic Structure). Thus whereas in the second sense of economic determinism, we spoke of the determining limits beyond which superstructural and ideological

phenomena could not go, now we speak of the actual content within these limits which the Economic Structure gives rise to. Together, these determinations make for the "correspondence" between economic and non-economic configurations to which Marx so often refers. But, it is important to remember, this (third) sense of economic determinism -- though highly suggestive and even intriguing -- is characterized by Marx usually in the form of ad hoc, highly specific accounts or asides. Indeed it is probably not properly subsumed under the concept of "determinism" at all: unless we think of this term (as Marx, following Hegel, often does) as equivalent to "make determinate".

Perhaps the most graphic way of explicating this generally permissive mode of economic determinism is by illustration.

Consider a capitalist Economic Structure. It is constituted of "bloodless" exchange-value terms: abstract, equal and homogeneous money-units to which all use-values and economic roles in the society are increasingly reduced. This capitalist Economic Structure, says Marx, is qualitatively "reflected" in the political and legal doctrines of Equal Rights,<sup>40</sup> the abstract religion of Potestantism,<sup>41</sup> and the empty reified categories of German Idealism.<sup>42</sup> Its translation of social labour into cash value terms, into the "social hieroglyphic" of money, is mirrored as a "reflex in men's brains" of commodities

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<sup>40</sup>Capital, Volume I, p. 176.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid, p. 79.

<sup>42</sup>The German Ideology, passim.



and forms of capital ruling the world as independent entities (a "fetishism" in which what I have called "mapping" takes its strictest form).<sup>43</sup> Its atomicizing of economic intercourse is expressed in moral doctrines of exploitative self-interest.<sup>44</sup> Its principle of unlimited competition is projected not only onto specific Malthusian-Darwinist theories but the very structure of consciousness of society's members.<sup>45</sup> Its indifference to human content is reflected in a scientific and religious rhetoric of "abstinence";<sup>46</sup> its inequalities of income in the popular notion of "God's Elect";<sup>47</sup> its unrestricted extension into distant lands in the credo of "Civilization";<sup>48</sup> its reduction of the labourer to machine-appendage status in an ethic of "Work" and "Order";<sup>49</sup> and its removal of all hindrances to exploitation by Capital in the laws and slogans of "Liberty" and "Freedom".<sup>50</sup>

(The primacy of the Economic Structure in all this being demonstrable for Marx by -- among other things -- the fact that economic interest

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<sup>43</sup>See especially Marx's section "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof" (Capital, Volume I, pp. 71-83).

<sup>44</sup>Ibid, p. 449ff.

<sup>45</sup>Selected Correspondence, p. 157 and p. 367.

<sup>46</sup>Capital, Volume I, pp. 596-7.

<sup>47</sup>Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts (Moscow: 1961) p. 138ff.

<sup>48</sup>Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization, ed. Schlomo Avineri (N.Y.: 1969) p. 347.

<sup>49</sup>Capital, Volume I, p. 229 and p. 368.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid, p. 279ff.



generally takes precedence over superstructural or ideological content. As he says in one of his wittiest epigrammatic thrusts: "The English Church will more readily pardon an attack on 38 of its 39 articles than 1/39 of its income").<sup>51</sup>

Now, though the above panorama of illustration could be unfolded indefinitely, it gives us no precise account of the form of determinism under consideration. But such conceptual flexibility is, I think, unavoidable. As with economic determinism in the second sense, methodological placement in a definite historical context is required here before the general principle -- in this case what I have called "mapping" -- affords satisfactory specificity.

At this point, I have come to the end of my outline of the general signification of Marx's economic determinism theory. That is, the Economic Structure "determines" via what I name: (1) Work-Leisure Constraints (2) Social Selection and (3) Mapping. If we consider again the traditional objections that have been fielded against this theory, we can see that none of them succeeds against the version that has been presented here. First of all, Relations of

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid, p. 10. One of the most detailed accounts by Marx of the way Economic-Structural interests regularly assert themselves over superstructural and ideological considerations is in the pamphlet The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (Moscow: 1967). Here too his wit flashes: "Thus the Tories in England" he says, "long imagined they were enthusiastic about monarchy, the church and the beauties of the old English Constitution, until the day of danger snatched from them the confession that they are enthusiastic only about ground rent"(p. 38).

It is instructive to compare Marx's contrast between the "hidden" Economic Structure and the "visible" Superstructure -- Ideology to Freud's contrast between the "latent" and "manifest" content of dreams (or to our own conventional "real motives" and "rationalizations").

Productions can be adequately distinguished from Forces of Production and Legal Superstructure. Secondly, the claims that Marx's economic determinism is indefensibly monocausal, that it is easily refuted by historical fact, that it is committed to logically improper predication, that it is incompatible with ethical and personal responsibility and so forth, all seem clearly to fail against the theory of economic determinism as articulated above.<sup>52</sup> Only in the realm of application of the theory does Marx's economic determinism appear to run into difficulty: for example, his most famous prediction that the industrial working class of the West will "inevitably"<sup>53</sup> rise up against and overthrow the capitalist Economic Structure. Ironically here, Marx's confident anticipation of such a revolution (was it just

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<sup>52</sup>Economic monocausality is simply not claimed or implied by Marx's texts (rather the opposite: see, for example, his claim that revolutionary class struggle is "political", not "economic" in a letter to Bolte, 1871 (Selected Correspondence, p. 327) and in The Poverty of Philosophy, p. 150). Refutive historical events since Marx's work do not tell against any of the principles of Marx's theory of economic determinism (as I have defined them) but only, if at all, against their specific administration. The sort of prediction which Popper accuses Marx of making is by no means, as Popper claims, a commitment of his economic determinist theory. And the denial of ethical and personal responsibility which is said to be implied by Marx's economic determinism is certainly not so implied: as the latter's continual use of the vocabulary of praise and (more so) blame indicates.

<sup>53</sup>It is well not to put too much weight on Marx's use of the term "inevitable". Among other reasons, it is sometimes improperly intruded into English translations. For example, the well known statement from the first Preface to Capital -- "It is a question of these laws themselves, of these tendencies working with iron necessity towards inevitable results" -- makes no mention of "inevitable results" in the original German.

hortatory?) misses the mark from underestimation of the Economic Structure's determining force rather than overestimation of it.

His error is, in the end, on the side of voluntarism.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Marx thought, for example, that the working class would resolve by revolutionary action the conflict between ever expanding Forces of Production and the Economic Structure which increasingly confined these Forces of Production within a narrow "shell". It did not, apparently, occur to him that: (a) the working class might be too "determined" to ever mount such a collective assertion and, correlatively, (b) the growing Forces of Production might be progressively re-deployed as instruments to protect the Economic Structure (e.g. as weapons, administrative and policing personnel, and instruments of surveillance).



## CHAPTER VIII

### TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM

Just as Marx employs the German bestimmen and bedingen -- conventionally translated as "determine" -- to characterize the influence of the production relations/Economic Structure on the legal and political superstructure (in the largest sense), so he uses the same terms to characterize the influence of the forces of production on the relations of production/Economic Structure. So also, he calls the former the "base" (Basis) of the latter and repeatedly says the two "correspond" (entsprechen) with one another. In other words, the language Marx employs to describe the relationship between the productive forces and the productive relations/Economic Structure is similar to the language he employs to characterize the next-step-up relationship between the latter and the overall superstructure. In both cases, the terms "determine", "base" and "correspond" figure very prominently in his description. In both cases, the notion of a determinism has arisen from the use of the terms in question.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>This use of the terms "determine" (bedingen or bestimmen), "base" (Basis) and "correspond" (entsprechen) to characterize the relationship between the forces and relations of production is most persistent in The German Ideology, pp. 1-95.



The "determining" relationship which Marx thus suggests between the productive forces and the economic order is the essence of what I have called his "technological determinism". Through this relationship, the forces of production obviously also influence the "whole immense superstructure" but they do so thereby only indirectly -- determining the economic determiner so to say. The forces of production also determine (in the sense of "make determinate") the needs and capacities of human nature: as I pointed out in some detail in Chapter I. Furthermore, in the exceptional breakdown stages of a mature social order such forces, mediated by class struggle, impel superstructural change on their way to "bursting" the relations of production/Economic Structure: as I described in Chapter IV. Finally, Marx even suggests on a few occasions that productive-forces content is in some sense directly "mapped" onto and reflected in ideology as economic content is: this determining influence I will briefly discuss near the end of this section. But the relationship of a technologically determining sort with which he is most fundamentally concerned is that between the productive forces and the relations of production/Economic Structure ut sic. Any discussion of his "technological determinism" has to focus, with Marx, on this foundational relationship of his world-view structure (He himself seems to have regarded the identification of the relationship in question as one of his truly new contributions to human thought (SC, 85).) So though it is acknowledged here (and largely described elsewhere) that the forces of production are in various relationships with other factors

of Marx's model (i.e. human nature and the elements of the super-structure), which in one sense or another could be said to be relationships of a technologically determining sort, I am mainly concerned in this section with the relationship of "correspondence" between the determining productive force "base" and the determined production relations/Economic Structure. Herein lies, I think, the complex conceptual linchpin of Marx's entire system.

Unfortunately, this pivotal relationship of "correspondence" between the productive forces "base" and the economic order has been the subject of -- as with so much of Marx's categorical framework -- considerable disagreement about what it means and/or whether it in fact obtains. As I pointed out in my introductory chapter, the relationship in question is for many critics intractably problematic. Once again, too, since Marx's relevant texts fail, typically, to articulate the precise principles involved, one must press analysis beyond the raw letter of his corpus to ascertain the logic of the connection he is here claiming. His own repeated characterization of the relationship in question is simply that "relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of the material forces of production." Now, we have already argued in the last section that the implicit converse of "correspond to" is for Marx "selected out": that is, what does not "correspond to" or "comply with" or "answer to" the "base" (here, forces of production at a definite stage of development) is not permitted to arise or persist or is, in any parlance, "selected out" (here, economic phenomena). For example,

feudal economic arrangements cannot survive or arise in a society with modern factories and machinery, according to Marx: the former do not "correspond" with the latter -- the underlying principles of the required correspondence being the main issue to which I will soon address myself -- and hence they are not so to say a "live" option in such a technological environment. The "selecting out" which thus occurs may be -- adaptation aside -- of a ruling-out-in-advance sort, a failed-attempt sort, an epochal-revolutionary sort or whatever: but the general principle of economic phenomena which do not correspond to the stage of development of the productive forces being economic phenomena which do not therefore arise, or persist -- this general principle or "law" remains the same. The determining relationship between the technological and the economic thus continues to resemble in outline the next-set-up determining relationship between the economic and the superstructural. In both cases, the latter either "corresponds" with the former (the Basis) or, as a matter of fact, it fails to come into -- or to persist -- in historical existence. There is, in sum, a suggestive and integrating symmetry of principle informing the two central relationships of Marx's overall framework of sociohistorical explanation: a neat congruence of sense between his notions of what I have called "technological determinism" and "economic determinism".

However identifying such similarities between the principal determining relationships in Marx's system still does not disclose to us the answer to the more pertinent question before us -- which



is the nature of the technological-economic correspondence in terms of which the so-called technological determinism in question takes place and by which alone the latter may be precisely understood. It is all very well to say that the economic order must "correspond" to the stage of development of the productive forces or be "selected out" of historical existence -- and, in this sense, be subject to the latter's determination -- but until we know the salient principles of such technical-economic correspondence, the determining relationship in question remains vague. There is, of course, the still further question of the grounds Marx gives for the primacy of the technological in such correspondence (to which I shall later attend), but the more elementary, if difficult, question which must be answered here first is what are the underlying principles of this claimed correspondence itself. In such claimed correspondence lies, as I have indicated, the most important linkage of Marx's whole mature philosophy of society and history: it must, therefore, be granted the systematic explanation hitherto denied it (by both Marx and his defenders, as far as I know: an omission which has been amply noticed by his critics). Without further ado, then, I suggest that the following (four) principles can be gleaned, if not cited, from Marx's work to clarify the crucial link of technological-economic correspondence he supposes:

- 1) The relations of production/Economic Structure correspond to a definite stage of development of the forces of production in so far as: the units of effective ownership involved in the former correspond in scale to the units of technological integration involved in the



latter.

Thus, for example, if a society's stage of development of productive forces involves technological units of large-scale factories with machines and extensive work-forces integrated into single great productive complexes, then the relations of production/Economic Structure must mutatis mutandis involve effective ownership units of correspondingly large-scale dimensions, (or, specifically, "great capital concentrations").<sup>2</sup> If the scale of effective ownership units does not so comply with or correspond to such scale of technological units, the ownership units in question cannot -- because the relations they entail are by nature exclusive -- accommodate the technological units in question. There is a mismatch between production and ownership domains of integration: the technological units of productive forces are in "contradiction" with the economic powers over such productive forces by virtue of different scales of unification. Thus, in Marx's account, the small ownership units of feudalism "dissolve" in the face of large-scale industry, and "petty" capitalist ownership

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<sup>2</sup>A technological unit may be defined as a set of productive forces co-ordinated by one productive plan. Similarly, an effective ownership unit may be defined as a set of productive forces related to one owner (individual or corporate). Thus, otherwise put, the required technological-economic correspondence which is being suggested here is a correspondence of unitary domains of ownership to unitary domains of productive plan. (This does not mean that one domain of ownership may not include more than one productive unit (as in present capitalist conglomerates). It is just means that domains of ownership must correspond to technological domains in the sense of being as large in scale as the latter: which is of course consistent with their being larger scaled).

is "ruined" or "taken over" by the same process. Since the scale of their effective ownership units is unable to comply with the scale of the technological units prescribed by the stage of development of productive forces of the society in question, their ownership domains have to be somehow rendered into larger capital holdings which do so correspond in scale. By virtue of this same principle of scale-correspondence between production and proprietary units, Marx also predicts the end of large-holding capitalism itself. That is, as technological units achieve an increasingly international scale, capital ownership units must correspondingly grow to comply with them: more and more beyond past national boundaries of ownership (thus increasing imperialism, national conflicts, wars among leading capitalist nations, etc.) until such technological-economic correspondence of scale can only be stably secured through the conscious regulation of a Social Plan of international communism (i.e. beyond private ownership altogether).

(Though Marx himself seems solely concerned with cases in which the scale of technological units has outgrown the scale of ownership units (as in late feudal and late capitalist modes of production), the principle of correspondence in question would seem also to cover somewhat converse cases in which the scale of ownership units has over-reached the scale of technological units, thereby involving a non-correspondence or "contradiction" between forces and relations of production the other-way-round from what Marx seemed to have considered the historically universal pattern (i.e. the productive

forces "outgrowing the economic order but not vice-versa: "No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have been developed" (Bott., 67)). Yet it would seem plausible that it is just such a converse non-correspondence between forces and relations of production (not precisely converse because ownership units may to some extent be larger-scaled than technological units without dysfunction of the latter, whereas the reverse is not possible) that might well yield an explanation of the transition from the ancient Roman social order to the barbarian/feudal order which does not seem otherwise explicable in terms of this principle of scale-correspondence. That is, briefly, here there does not appear to have been a case of productive units "outgrowing" in scale economic units at all (as Marx says, in the above citation, must be the case in all such epochal transitions), but rather a case of economic units in a more permissive sense "outgrowing" technological units: Roman big farms (internally) and imperialism (externally) more and more extending the scale of ownership domains beyond the scale of productive force integration of the day, and ultimately suffering — by virtue of such over-reaching of economic control — decline and ruin (with the smaller-scale ownership units of a new order taking over to resolve the "contradiction" in question). Though the principle of scale-correspondence indicated by Marx might thus be aptly inverted as an explanatory device of real fecundity here, his insistence that such correspondence is only rent into revolutionary contradiction by productive force outgrowth seems to rule out such a promising direction of inquiry.

2) The relations of production/Economic Structure correspond to a



definite stage of development of the forces of production in so far as: the social co-ordination of exchange and appropriation of products involved in the former corresponds to the social co-ordination of the production of these products involved in the latter.

Thus, for example, if the stage of development of the productive forces is such that masses of individuals co-operate in their work-activities, then the relations of production/Economic Structure must be such that the exchange and appropriation of the products so made -- more simply put, their distribution -- is correspondingly mass co-ordinated: by some standard medium of purchase (e.g. money), available in sufficient quantity and adequately divided for the co-operating producers to continue producing (e.g. salary system), and so on. If the social co-ordination of economic distribution does not so correspond with the social co-ordination of productive co-operation then the relations of production/Economic Structure must either be adjusted so that it does (e.g. by collective bargaining, charity and welfare programmes, rationing, price controls, monetary schemes, etc.) or the economic order in question will be revolutionized (e.g. by worker's revolt). Without such correspondence, the human parts of the productive mechanism have no assured form of material sustenance and the products of the productive mechanism in question cannot be marketed in the manner required to regenerate the productive cycle: which alternatives, though of course possible are, as a matter of technological imperative historically avoided in favour of maintaining or securing the correspondence of co-ordination between men's producing and men's receiving,



even should this involve revolution of the established economic order itself. Hence Marx predicts in accordance with this principle that in capitalist society as men's co-operation in production is maintained or increased while at the same time the distribution of their products is progressively concentrated in ruling-class hands through the "laissez-faire" expansion of private capital, a non-correspondence of social co-ordination between the forces and relations of production (successfully coping superstructural interventions aside) will increasingly obtain that must ultimately culminate in a socialist revolution: which revolution will re-establish the required correspondence between the social co-ordination of production and of distribution by collective ownership. Here, as in all such "contradictions" between forces and relations of production, the forces of production are held by Marx to be ultimately over-riding: their social co-ordination of labour-power will maintain its stage of development whether the established system of distribution is able to comply with such productive co-operation in its present form or must be revolutionized into a new economic order to do so.

(Note that the general principle here of correspondence in social co-ordination between forces and relations of production could be met -- has been met since Marx's day -- by other than revolutionary alterations of the economic base. Indeed the centralization of control of the mode of appropriation which Marx considered a practical prerequisite of such social co-ordination of distribution seems to have been successfully secured by what we have come to call "fascism",

as well as by "welfare statism". So here again Marx's underlying general principle seems to cover possibilities which he himself did not take into consideration: the former thus retaining a status of genuine and important plausibility, while Marx's inferences from it seem mistaken i.e. confounded by subsequent historical development in which social co-ordination of distribution has been achieved by other forms of centralization than revolutionary transition to socialism).

3) The relations of production/Economic Structure correspond to a definite stage of development of the forces of production in so far as: what is effectively owned in the former (the "content" of the economic "form") corresponds to the socially standard level of productivity involved in the latter.<sup>3</sup> Thus, for example, Marx holds that in the transition from feudalism to capitalism as machines, factories and co-operative labour raised the socially standard level of productivity in European society, the ownership content of all less efficient forces of production unavoidably dissolved through transformation (e.g. craft-skill to pliant factory labour power),

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<sup>3</sup>Very briefly put, a productive force is at or above the "socially standard level of productivity" for Marx when it demands no more than the "socially necessary labour" to produce (or help produce) a certain quantity of material use-values. For example, a handloom is well below the socially standard level of productivity in 1850 England because it requires far more than the "socially necessary labour" -- a prominently recurrent, if problematic, concept in Marx's work -- to produce (or help produce) x yards of cloth. Thus ownership of a handloom in 1850 England is no longer a relation of production (consider the adjective "uneconomic" which might be used to describe such ownership) because its ownership content does not correspond to the "definite stage of development of productive forces" of the society in question.

takeover (e.g. sale of feudal lands to capitalists) and simple extinction (e.g. junking of old tools) of the productive forces in question. Ownership obtains only so long as its socially competitive productive efficiency: which effective ownership may endure over long periods of time with the same productive force content (for example, in the case of monopolist feudal guilds which managed to keep the social stage of development of productive forces more or less fixed by strictly enforced regulations), or may endure for only short periods of time with the same productive force content (for example, in the case of laissez-faire capitalism where the social stage of development of productive forces spiralled continually upwards in the competition among capitalists to make cheaper goods). But in all cases, Marx indicates, what productive force is effectively owned complies with the socially standard level of productivity. Otherwise the labour-power, instrument or natural resource so possessed is rendered obsolete or "uneconomic". It is thus in accordance with this principle of required correspondence between the ownership content of the relations of production/Economic Structure and the socially standard level of productivity of the forces or production that Marx predicts a (still further) sort of increasing "immiserization" of the majority in capitalist society. That is, in so far as the socially standard of productivity is continually rising and in so far as only owners of great amounts of capital possess thereby the resources to update their forces of production in compliance with such development, the productive force content of small capitalist ownership is constantly



being rendered socially uncompetitive with insufficient economic holdings to adapt to society's ever higher stages of technological development. The "petty bourgeoisie" of society are thus increasingly plunged into the ranks of those who have nothing left to sell but their own labour-power. And like all other proletarians, they are able to sell this (their own labour-power), in turn, only if it is, or is made, fit for the rapidly changing technological environment. The immiserization which thereby takes place is a matter of insecurity and loss of past productive-force ownership (e.g. small capitalists "going under" and skilled or unskilled workers being bereft of the value of their former labour-power): as distinguished from -- if complementary to -- the relative immiserization which occurs with respect to the ruling-class capitalists simply owning more and more capital. (See Chapter III)

It is indeed because the ascending stages of development of productive forces in capitalist society so regularly require the increasing ranks of those who own only their labour-power to continually reform the content of such ownership to maintain its exchange-value, that Marx holds that a "many-sided" labour-power is thereby increasingly enjoined by capitalism: a requirement which, he further holds, must ultimately subvert the very fixed division-of-labour framework of capitalism and class society generally (yet another example of how he views the capitalist economic order as sowing the seeds of its own destruction):

Modern Industry on the other hand, through its catastrophes imposes the necessity of recognizing as a fundamental law of production, variation of work, consequently fitness of the labourer for varied work, consequently the greatest possible development of his various aptitudes. It becomes a question of life and death for society to adapt the mode of production to the normal functioning of this law.



Modern Industry indeed compels society, under penalty of death to replace the detail-worker of today, crippled by life-long repetition of the one and the same trivial operation, and thus reduced to a mere fragment of a man, by the fully developed individual, fit for a variety of labours, ready to face any change of production, and to whom the different social functions he performs are but so many modes of giving free scope to his own natural and acquired powers ... There is also no doubt that such revolutionary ferments, the final result which is the abolition of the old division of labour, are diametrically opposed to the capitalist form of production, and to the economic status of the labourer corresponding to that form. (CI, 487-8)

Note the connection here between ever-developing forces of production or technology and the fulfillment of man's natural capacities. It is in ways like this that the mature Marx presupposes the human nature factor and assimilates its development to that of the productive forces. In such manner one could say, technological determinism is on another implicit level the affirmation for Marx of man's essential nature. However other possibilities consistent with the course of modern industry he describes such as merely less and less requirement for productive labour-power and an increasing "industrial reserve army" to choose fit labour-power from with no "fully developed individuals" required -- are elsewhere acknowledged by Marx: which make the sanguine connection he draws here between technological and human-natural development somewhat hard to accept. The difficulty of this connection will, indeed, provoke concern a few more times yet before this essay is concluded.

4) The relations of production/Economic Structure correspond to a definite stage of development of the productive forces in so far as: the mode of extraction of surplus-labour by the ruling-class involved

in the former complies with the technological requirements of the latter.

Thus, for example, if the stage of development of the productive forces (i.e. factories, machines and assembly-lines) requires that labour-power be present in unskilled form and elastic quantities continuously during the working week, then the relations of production/Economic Structure must correspond with this requirement by a surplus-value extracting mechanism which is sufficiently indifferent to labour-power (no "gradations of skill", "personal ties" etc.), sustained in operation (not the intermittent expropriation of a part of the working week as in "corvée labour", but expropriation spread throughout the week), embracing in application (not restricted to this or that retinue or craft but with all the "free" labour-power of society at its disposal), and so forth, to answer to the requirements of the technological stage in question. Hence in Marx's account as the stage of development of productive forces of European society developed from individual plot tillage and small craft shops to mechanized and mass-labour farming and factories, the mode of expropriation of surplus-labour changed and had to change in accordance with such development: changed and had to change, that is, from the "fixed hierarchy" and "personal ties" of feudalism which could not accommodate such development to the "cash nexus" of capitalism which could and did. It is also in accordance with this principle of required compliance between the mode of expropriation of surplus-value and the technical requirements of a definite stage of development of the productive forces that

Marx projects the inexorable dissolution of the capitalist economic order itself by virtue of an increasingly automated or "self-acting" technology which, in so far as it reduces the need for human labour, contracts the very source of the capitalists' surplus-value while at the same time swelling the ranks of the unemployed. Hence the rate of surplus-value accruing to capitalists must progressively fall, predicts Marx, until the capitalist economic form is no longer compatible with its labour-diminishing productive force base, and is revolutionized into a new economic order where surplus-value extraction by a ruling-class disappears altogether as historically obsolete in the technological conditions of an automated society (i.e. a society where labour can no longer be exploited to the extent that it is no longer technically required).<sup>4</sup> Hence too, simultaneously, Marx predicts, sheer unemployment must increase as an ever-expanding sphere of "idle" human productive forces which either die or live parasitically, and -- ipso facto -- which cannot be used to lower the working day for those who toil: until, again, the capitalist economic order inevitably disappears and is sublated in a new economic form which can accommodate all the forces of production as then developed (i.e. a society which, by transcending the former mode of extraction of surplus-value, is able to employ all its productive labour without any ruin or parasiticism of idle

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<sup>4</sup>For the most extended and interesting discussion of this process, see G, 692-706.



workers, and is simultaneously able thereby to permit a shorter working day for all: a society, that is, which is only possible when the extraction of money profits ceases to be the "law of motion" of labour utilization).

(Once again, it is important to distinguish this underlying general principle of required correspondence between technological stage and economic order -- here, more specifically, the necessary compliance of the latter's stipulations of labour-power utilization with the former's -- from the particular inferences Marx seems to draw from the principle in question (e.g. his claim that a proletarian revolution must occur against advanced capitalism in order for such technological-economic correspondence to be secured). Here, as elsewhere, the principle of correspondence in question may hold true, and yet Marx's application of it, which is not a straight logical consequence of it, prove false: with, for example in the case of the prediction of an inevitable proletarian revolution, the claimed correspondence being secured in other ways than such revolution.

I press this point again here because it seems to be a common mistake of commentators on Marx to miss it: and to suppose, for instance, that some or all of his basic theoretical principles (inter alia, those pertaining to technological-economic correspondence) are falsified by virtue merely of this failed prediction of revolution).

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These four general principles together clarify in a systematic way, I think, the long obscure nature of the required correspondence



Marx claims between a society's definite stage of development of productive forces and its relations of production/Economic Structure. Though they are all implied by Marx's texts in one way or another, their above formulation is virtually entirely new (so far as I know), and may benefit therefore from the following further remarks: which shall also bring us in the end to discussion of the question of the primacy of the productive forces in this complex and foundational relationship of Marx's general theoretical framework:

a) These underlying general principles of the correspondence Marx claims between a society's technology and its economic order seem to refute decisively the common criticism that such claim of correspondence has no grounds at all. Raymond Aron's objection, for example (see my introduction, p. 11) that there "may be exactly the same technical organization of agricultural production whether the land is the individual property of a great landowner, the collective property of producer's co-operative or the property of the state" would appear to suffer, as so much of the criticism of Marx, from missing the substance of his position almost altogether. That is, Marx's notion of production relations/Economic Structure is as we have seen an uncomparably more developed one than merely, say, ownership "by a great landowner": it makes all the difference, for example, whether such "ownership by a great landowner" is feudal or capitalist or some other specific form (and Marx could hardly have emphasized this more strongly than he does). Yet Aron's wording is utterly indifferent to all such critical and laboured distinctions.

It seems difficult therefore to take such criticisms as his seriously as objections: though of course one might well take them seriously as instantiations of Marx's general claim that mainstream ideology is systematically misleading. But whatever the merit of this latter suggestion, Marx's claim of correspondence between productive forces and relations is hardly the insubstantial strawman that Aron and others have suggested.

Supposing though that Aron's objection were less conveniently simplistic in its understanding of Marx's position on this issue of technological-economic correspondence, and ran something like this: "There may be exactly the same technical organization of agricultural production whether the land is owned by a great landowner according to feudal economic arrangements, by a producers' collective according to socialist economic arrangements or by a state according to capitalist economic arrangement." As soon as the objection is so rendered in a form which is not wholly devoid of the fundamental and substantive distinctions Marx makes with respect to economic formations (though even this wording is hardly adequate), it already loses its tenability. For example, ownership by a great landowner according to feudal economic arrangements is such that mass production methods of working the soil -- a "technical organization of agricultural production" which is, of course, possible with the latter two forms of economic arrangement -- is clearly ruled out on a number of counts (as the exposition above of the several underlying principles of Marx's notion of technological-economic correspondence makes clear). Then, as for communist and

capitalist economic arrangement being able to accommodate the "same technical organization of agricultural production" this part of the reformulated claim, so far as it is true, represents no objection to Marx at all in so far as it was his very well-known view that capitalism's technical organization of production (e.g. mass-production methods) had to be adopted by socialism as the latter's requisite productive base. If instead the objection in question were to refer to another sort of state ownership of land than capitalist -- say, ancient Asiatic state ownership -- the objection would still remain without force: for then, the state ownership in question would not be able to accommodate the "same technical organization of agricultural production" as socialist ownership because, among other reasons, it wants the mechanism of social distribution necessary to sustain methods of mass production (see principle (2) above). In short, Aron's objection seems to fare no better when it is bolstered with some of the substance it requires to be informed than when it is left tilting at a strawman.

b) The four principles in question are, obviously, very intimately related. Indeed they are so closely related that one might properly wonder about their ultimate amenability to four-fold distinction. But I think one can sustain their discreteness as principles. (1) and (2), for example, can be kept distinct, dealing as they do with separate aspects of the economic form (i.e. its scale of ownership units and its system of distribution respectively), not to say separate aspects of the productive forces. As well (2) and (3) are easily



distinguishable in so far as (3) is concerned with the content of individual's effective ownership whereas (2) involves no such consideration. Then too (3) and (4) may just as clearly be held apart: and so on, I believe, for all possible such pairings. However, it is fair to say that in most historical situations which Marx treats the correspondence of these sorts between the stage of development of the productive forces and the production relations/Economic Structure is more or less across-the-board: that is, in most cases such correspondence, or non-correspondence, obtains with respect to all four principles at once. Thus, for example, if there is, or is not, correspondence between the scale of technological unit and scale of effective ownership unit then in most cases there is, or is not, correspondence in terms of the other three principles at the same time. It is the historical prevalence of just this kind of integral interconnection which, I suppose, made Marx think of human society as an organism and of any "contradiction" between its economic "anatomy" and its productive force "organs" as the signal of the impending birth of a whole new body, the "birth pangs" of a new form of life altogether.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>It perhaps warrants an aside here that Marx's imagery of organic birth in connection with revolution seems out of line with the latter conceived as armed civilwar: which, if we wish to pursue such imagery of organism further, would seem more akin to disease of the body-politic -- involving amputation rather than midwifery. Lest it be thought that this is mere play upon metaphor, it's worth adding the further observation here that revolution by armed civil war would seem apt to destroy in large part the very productive forces upon which such revolution is, according to Marx's theory, materially dependent. So such a form of revolution seems on several counts, difficult to square with the Marxian schema: though, on the other side, the technologically progressive French and English "bourgeois" revolutions required cont'd



c) Correspondence between a society's developed forces of production and its relations of production/Economic Structure is, for Marx, what one might call a general law of collective human survival. During much or most of a society's existence, the problem of non-correspondence or "contradiction" in this regard simply does not arise: correspondence obtains without complication as the necessary material foundation of its (the society's) stability. Even when non-correspondence or "contradiction" between the technological and the economic does threaten or obtain, typically in the late stages of a social order, it still must, according to Marx, be somehow rapidly resolved, somehow rapidly engineered back into correspondence again: either tennously and haphazardly through superstructural interventions, conquests of new markets, destruction/waste of productive forces, etc., or a social revolution which alters the production relations/Economic Structure into a new form where the required technological-economic correspondence is more decisively secured. Marx seems also to have believed that the former sort of piecorneal resolution "inevitably" leads to the latter, thoroughgoing sort of resolution: but be that as it may,

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just such armed civil war to give "birth" to a fully blown capitalist society and Marx, least of all, was unaware of this or the further good possibility that a proletarian revolution would take the form of an armed civil war too. In short, the whole issue here requires a much more extended treatment than I am able to offer now, have offered, or will offer in this section (or indeed any other of my essay). I merely take the opportunity of this footnote to acknowledge my general omission in this regard: the issue in question being, in my view, one which has already distracted readers of Marx overmuch from the theoretical underpinnings of his social philosophy.

he was committed to the view in some way correspondence between forces and relations of production had to be secured if men were to collectively survive. Indeed in this "law" of technological-economic correspondence lies the nub, I think, of historical materialist doctrine: social stability, instability, and revolution seem all primarily accounted for by Marx in its terms.

d) So far as the primacy of the stage of development of productive in its relationship of correspondence with the relations of production/Economic Structure, such primacy is held by Marx on the following grounds (though i and ii are more implied than stated):

i The former in some form is a necessary material condition of the latter, but not vice-versa. In other words, men cannot have a private-property economic order without a stage of development of productive forces (which they require to reproduce themselves), but they can have a stage of development of productive forces without a private-property economic order (e.g. with communism). The former is an "ethical, Nature-imposed necessity", but the latter is a defeasible historical construction.

ii A stage of development of productive forces that yields a surplus product is a necessary material condition of production relations/Economic Structure with a ruling-class (i.e. to support the latter's non-productive existence: CI, 211-12), but not vice-versa. With communist economic arrangements, for example, there exists and must exist a stage of development of productive forces yielding a surplus product, but there does not and cannot exist a

ruling-class order. The former is the indispensable material basis of the latter, but the latter is merely one economic form (albeit historically prevalent) within which the former can obtain.

iii In all cases where correspondence between a society's stage of development of the productive forces and its relations of production/Economic Structure cannot be secured without the forfeit of one or the other, the former is preserved and the latter is annihilated/replaced by an economic form that can so correspond.

Hence Marx says:

As the main thing is not to be deprived of the fruits of civilization of the acquired productive forces, the traditional forms in which they were produced must be smashed (PofP, 107).

Men never relinquish what they have won, but this does not mean that they never relinquish the social form in which they have acquired certain productive forces. On the contrary, in order that they not be deprived of the result attained, and forfeit the fruits of civilization, they are obliged from the moment when the form of their commerce no longer corresponds to the productive forces acquired, to change all their traditional social forms (PofP, 157).

Now a few paragraphs back, I suggested that the nub of the historical materialist doctrine was the general "law" that a society's stage of development of productive forces and its relations of production must correspond. Here we have the further and complementary "law" that when such correspondence cannot be secured without the forfeit of the former or the latter, it is the former (the existing stage of development of the productive forces) that is preserved and the latter that is forfeited (i.e. revolutionized into a new form to accommodate such preservation). Thus while the first "law"



stipulates a multi-faceted correspondence between the technological economic factors in a society, the second "law" claims the primacy of the technological factor in this relationship of correspondence on those occasions when such correspondence may only be obtained by the relinquishing of one or the other factor in its present stage (in the case of forces of production) or form (in the case of relations of production).

Now it is crucial to note and explicate the sense of the primacy of the productive forces that is being suggested here. As I have formulated it, such primacy refers only to those occasions when either the stage of development of the productive forces or the economic order must be "forfeited". It is quite consistent with this claim that the productive forces are "fettered" by the production relations/Economic Structure -- and in this sense subject to the latter's primacy, so long as such "fettering" does not involve a relinquishing of established productive stage, a giving up of the achieved level of material productivity of the society in question. Hence, for example, the production relations/Economic Structure of advanced capitalism may since Marx's day have hindered technological development and indeed involved the outright wastage and destruction of productive forces on an increasing scale (e.g. through growing unemployment, non-productive utilization of labour-power, destruction of commodities, unused factory capacities, decimating economic wars, etc.); but nevertheless -- since during the same period the level of productivity of the societies in question has been preserved and indeed



has enormously increased -- there has been during this time no relinquishing of the achieved stage of development of the productive forces, no giving up of the "fruits of civilization" of historically developed technology.

In other words, the general principle or "law" under discussion (as formulated above) is sufficiently restrictive in its reference that the course of development of advanced capitalism since Marx's writings -- however draconian its "fettering" of productive forces may have been -- has not falsified its claim: cases where correspondence between the stage of development of the productive forces and the relations of production/Economic Structure cannot be secured without the forfeit of one or the other, cases to which alone the "law" under discussion applies, have in advanced capitalism simply not arisen (as opposed to late feudalism where, it seems, at least in Marx's account, the situation was such that either the stage of technological development or the feudal economic order did have to be sacrificed: hence the "thunderclaps" of the bourgeois revolution).

But it would be disingenuous to leave the impression that Marx made or implied the distinction between "fettering" and "forfeit" upon which the above argument in favour of his principle of productive force primacy is based. I think it is fair to say that he quite conflated the concepts of "fettering" and "forfeit", and that, in consequence, he often (as it turns out, mistakenly) anticipated a revolution of the advanced capitalist economic order as "inevitable" by virtue of its "fettering" of productive forces alone:

At a certain stage of [productive force] development it [the economic order] brings forth the agencies of its own dissolution ... but the old social organization fetters them and keeps them down. It must be annihilated; it is annihilated (CI, 762).

It is this latter, less discriminating view of productive force primacy that I have challenged several times, most directly at the end of the previous section. But since Marx's wording in such places as The Poverty of Philosophy passages cited above suggests the possibility of the salvaging distinction I have made, and since besides he does (as he must) allow for a "fettering" -- as opposed to "forfeit" -- of the stage of development of the productive forces to obtain extensively under the capitalist economic order without the latter's "annihilation" (i.e. during the many decades of his own life when, as his own descriptions make clear, this capitalist economic order persistently and without dissolution inhibited full productive force utilization in the historical maintenance of technical-economic correspondence) -- since there are these enabling features of his analysis to ground my unconventionally strict interpretation of the principle in question, I think such objections as I have indicated to his notion of productive force primacy can be plausibly met. That is, the latter notion seems to be sustainable if the inchoate distinction in Marx's work between "fettering" and "forfeit" is made.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>It is perhaps worth formulating this distinction between "fettering" and "forfeit" of the stage of development of the productive forces a little more explicitly here. As I have already suggested, to "fetter" such is to impede full utilization of the productive forces it involves but not thereby to diminish the quantity of use-values ("the fruits") these forces already cont'd



However it is well to emphasize one very crucial implication of accepting such an interpretative strategy. If the productive force stage of development in advanced capitalism owns primacy here only with respect to its not being "forfeited" by virtue of a capitalist inegument, then the latter under such an account seems to remain historically viable to this day and the necessary revolution of it claimed by Marx isn't in fact even yet necessary because various

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produce. Any case of decline in the achieved level of productivity is a case of "forfeit" of the stage of development of the productive forces, and it is here that the distinction between "fettering" and "forfeit" lies: the former does not imply this decline, whereas the latter does.

Is then a "depression" -- insofar as it involves a decline in level of material productivity -- a forfeit of the stage of development of the productive forces? As I have so far generally characterized "forfeit" and "stage", yes. To avoid this difficulty, and at the same time to capture better the ordinary force of the concepts "forfeit" and "stage", we must add the further provisos that the giving up of the achieved level of material productivity must be both more or less permanent (to count properly as "forfeit") and of qualitative significance (to count properly as relinquishing of a "stage of development"). As to the latter, where the giving up of productivity goes from quantitative to qualitative significance, where -- otherwise put -- the forfeit is of a full "stage" of development, Marx seems to mean by the latter (at the risk of category crossing): that which involves distinct types of productive force which are, at the same time, capable of distinct levels of material productivity (e.g. a hand-mill vis à vis a steam engine). In other words, the notion of forfeiting a stage of development of productive forces is sufficiently strict that -- when the concepts of "forfeit" and "stage" are unpacked -- the instance of simple "depression" in material productivity falls outside its range of reference.

However the definition I accord here to "forfeit of a stage of development of productive forces", though it may salvage Marx's general historical "law" so far as modern depressions and so forth go, raises an obvious problem so far as the epochal transition from the ancient Roman order to the so-called "Dark Ages". For here there does seem to have been an authentic forfeit of the stage of development of productive forces. Is then Marx's general historical "law" falsified by this particular but crucial case? cont'd



ascending stages of productive development have been -- even if "fettered" -- continuously preservable within its confines. The capitalist economic order is thus -- despite Marx's thundering proclamations to the contrary a century and more ago -- still a technologically permissible system in terms of the principle or "law" in question. If all this is so, then the revolution of the capitalist economic order which Marx urged and predicted may be ultimately, if unwittingly, predicated -- as I have suggested in various ways already -- on his underlying concept of human nature. For here, maintenance of the mature capitalist economic order could be said to require genuine "forfeit" -- of the fulfillment of man's essential capacities

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As I observed earlier, the transition in question is one with which Marx himself never seriously engages. It is a definite weak-link in his technological determinist account of history. One could through, I think, meet this problem on behalf of Marx in one of the following ways:

a) The transition from the ancient Roman order to the "Dark Ages" is indeed refractory to Marx's general historical "law" that a civilized society never forfeits its stage of development of productive forces, but does not thereby falsify this "law": the latter is simply true in most cases but not all, a statistical "law" or firmly obtaining regularity.

b) Marx's general historical "law" here is really meant to apply only to post-ancient Western society: it is not an unqualifiedly general historical "law", but qualifiedly such (i.e. applicable to the last 1000 years of Western civilization alone).

c) The transition from the ancient Roman order to the "Dark Ages" does not in fact involve a "forfeit of the stage or productive forces" at all so far as the basic productive complex of food and shelter goes, but on the contrary salvages these most basic forces of production from increasing ruin within the economic form of Roman imperialism (see my earlier discussion on pp. 6-7). Only for the most part the production of luxuries and military installations of the ruling-class is forfeited in this transition, and hence the falsification of Marx's general historical "law" by the transition in question is only apparent. The basic forces of production of the society as a whole are in this case actually secured from dissolution, and Marx's law is thus confirmed here rather than refuted.

I favour (c).

and needs as Marx construed the latter, if not the stage of development of productive forces. And here too, economic revolution could be said therefore to be "necessary" -- to ensure the realization of man's intrinsic being itself, if not the preservation of his technological base. The "inevitable" revolution that Marx anticipates against advanced capitalism could, thus, be ultimately grounded on human-natural rather than technological requirements. But I indulge here in speculative probes between more or less conflated roots of Marx's concern: probes which raise issues of vital importance, I suspect, but which work from distinctions that Marx himself never considers (i.e. distinctions between "fettering" and "forfeit" and between human-natural and technological requirements). At this point, our direct concern is with the primacy Marx ascribed to the stage of development of the productive forces in its relationship of correspondence with the production relations/Economic Structure: a primacy which, according to my formulation of the principle concerned, obtains only with respect to cases where either the former or the latter must be "forfeited"; and which, consequently, allows the primacy of the economic order to obtain, in dialectical turn, with respect to cases where utilization of the productive forces are merely "fettered".

Now this principle or "law" of the stage of development of the productive forces being preserved and the existing economic form being destroyed in cases of one or the other having to go, is, I suggest, a limited version of a still more general principle or "law" of Marx's that the stage of development of its productive forces is

never forfeited by a society<sup>7</sup> -- whether in conflict with the obtaining economic order or not. (i.e. "Men never relinquish what they have won").

Indeed in this more general principle or "law" of a society's stage of development of productive forces never being "forfeited" by it -- whether such stage is in correspondence or non-correspondence with the economic order or superstructure or anything else in Marx's sociohistorical ontology -- lies perhaps the ultimate ground of Marx's entire system, certainly of "technological determinism". It is I think essentially this embracing principle or "law" that earns the stage of development of productive forces the predicate "base" in Marx's discussion of technical-economic correspondence, and similar attribution elsewhere; and it is I think as well essentially in terms of this principle that for Marx the determination by "selection" of economic arrangements (and indeed -- implicitly at least -- all other sorts of sociohistorical phenomena) takes place.

Accordingly, the more limited principle initiating this subsection might be formally broadened into the more inclusive form:

No civilized society ever forfeits its stage of development of productives forces: including cases where the production relations/ Economic Structure must be annihilated/replaced by a new economic

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<sup>7</sup>Marx's phrase "fruits of civilization" in the passage I have been drawing upon indicates that the wording here might more properly be: "the stage of development of its productive forces is never forfeited by a civilized society". When I use the open term "society" here (and elsewhere), it is with this qualification in mind.



form to secure correspondence with such preservation of the stage of development of productive forces.

(Note that this expanded principle or "law", like its initial limited version, does not of itself permit the inference of an "inevitable" revolution against advanced capitalism either during or since Marx's day. My distinction between "fettering" and "forfeit", which Marx himself never follows through, rules out the propriety of such an inference as I emphasized earlier (possibly forcing Marx back, as I've already mentioned, to human nature as the ultimate ground of such "necessary" revolution.)

Note also, relatedly, that any such "forcing back" to human-natural as opposed to technological requirements as the necessitator for Marx of revolution against advanced capitalism might invite the speculation that the former not the latter constitutes the really ultimate "base" of history for him (though not, of course, explicitly). However, I think Marx himself believed that the technological was simply the material realization of the human-natural and that, as such, distinguishing between the requirements of the two was just abstract: and likely as well to raise normative/moral questions about "human nature" which could be aptly avoided by sticking to consideration of the more straightforwardly empirical issue of productive force requirements alone. In this way, the problem of a conflict between the so to say "humanist" and "technocrat" strains of his work is kept more or less mute. In such fuzzing over of the distinction between human-natural and technological requirements may lie, I think, one of the

arch ambiguities of his entire work.)

iv Any case of dissolution and/or revolution of established relations of production/Economic Structure is causally dependent on an "outgrowing" stage of development of the productive forces. Thus Marx's famous interlocking general claims of the Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy:

No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed.

and

New higher relations of production never appear before the material [i.e. productive] conditions of their existence leave matured in the womb of the old society.

Now, granting these are not mere tautologies (as they might be unsympathetically read), and granting, in addition, they are claims for the economic form's causal dependency for change on an "outgrowing" stage of productive force development (so far, I think, I am following the conventional rendering), these statements might furthermore be interpreted -- without, I trust, excessive ingenuity on my part -- as together constituting a neatly complementary "law" to that adduced in subsection iii above. That is, Marx holds (according to iii) that the stage of development of productive forces is never forfeited by a society and furthermore -- here is the theoretically integrating complement to this "law" I suggest he provides by the interlocking claims in question -- a society's production relations/Economic Structure never "disappear" and/or are revolutionized into "new, higher relations" unless they must be so negated/transcended to avoid

such forfeit (i.e. the forfeit of an "outgrowing" technological stage). Note that I am retaining here iii's distinction between "fettering" and "forfeit". Thus, according to my interpretation, to say that "no social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed" means, more explicitly, that no society's production relations/Economic Structure ever disappears before the stage of development of productive forces can no longer obtain within these production relations/Economic Structure without forfeit (i.e. the "room" for growth ends where the "forfeit" starts). And thus as well, under my reading, to say that "new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the realm of the old society" means, along the same lines, that "new, higher relations of production/Economic Structure never appear before the stage of development of productive forces to which they correspond must be forfeited under the old relations of production/Economic Structure within which they have developed (i.e. "higher" relations because they require no forfeit of technological stage whereas the old relations, within which this stage has arisen, do). In both cases, with my integrative rendering, change -- dissolution and/or revolution -- of an established economic form is held to be causally dependent on an "outgrowing" stage of development of productive forces which (by the "law" adduced in iii) requires such change for its non-forfeit or preservation to be secured. It seems then that, if my interpretation is accepted, Marx here is proposing a



"law" of the economic form's causal dependency for change on technological development which might be simply stated as follows:

No production relations/Economic Structure is ever dissolved and/or revolutionized before it must be so dissolved and/or revolutionized to avoid forfeit of an "outgrowing" stage of development of the productive forces.

As I have it then, this "law" links felicitously with the "law" of technological primacy reported in iii: namely, that a society never forfeits its stage of development of productive forces. Here, I repeat, we have the complementary "law" that it is only when the persistence of an economic order enjoins such a forfeit that it will disappear and/or appear in a new higher form.

Well, this complementary "law" of technological primacy (still remembering its qualification, as the first, by my "fetter" -- "forfeit" distinction) owns less immediate plausibility than the first inasmuch as it seems more subject to prima facie historical falsification: that is, cases of dissolving and/or revolutionizing of an economic order seem as a matter of fact not always causally dependent on cases of "outgrowing" technological stage whose preservation requires such dissolution and/or revolution. Let me therefore suggest two pairs of very simplified examples which might indicate a firmer and broader hold of this "law" than first appears:

a) Britain conquers India and then introduces to the latter a radically new stage of development of productive forces. India's relations of production/Economic Structure are dissolved and/or

revolutionized.

Turkey conquers Transylvania and then introduces to the latter no new stage of development of productive forces, but merely exacts tribute in produce. Transylvania's relations of production/Economic Structure are not dissolved and/or revolutionized.

In the first case, India's economic order changes because an "outgrowing" technological stage has been introduced by Britain (positive confirmation of the "law" in question). In the second case, Transylvania's economic order does not so change because such an "outgrowing" technological stage has not been introduced by the conqueror (negative confirmation of the "law" in question).

b) "Reds" and "Whites" vie for power in Russia. The Reds win and introduce a new stage of development of productive forces. Russia's relations of production/Economic Structure are dissolved and/or revolutionized.

"Labour" and "Conservatives" vie for power in Britain. Labour wins and introduces no new stage of development of productive forces. Britain's relations of production/Economic Structure is not dissolved and/or revolutionized.

In the first case, Russia's economic order changes because an "outgrowing" technological stage has been introduced by the Reds (again, positive confirmation of the "law" in question). In the second case, Britain's economic order does not so change because an "outgrowing" technological stage has not been introduced by the victorious party (again too, negative confirmation of the "law" in question).

Of course, these examples more illustrate than demonstrate the force of the "law" under present scrutiny. But they do lend I think an increased plausibility to Marx's principle here of the economic form's dependency for change on technological causation: or under my interpretation, to the "law" that no economic order is ever dissolved/revolutionized before it must be so dissolved/revolutionized to avoid forfeit of an "outgrowing" stage of development of the productive forces. Cases like the Russian Revolution of 1917 or the British conquest of India which might seem at first to be cases of old economic orders disappearing and new economic orders appearing by virtue of other-than-technological cause are, albeit via bare outline, shown on the contrary to obtain because of technological cause. Now assuming that the point has been made for such prima facie difficult cases -- as well as for the apparently more tractable historical case which Marx himself usually invokes (i.e. the transition of feudalism to capitalism in Western Europe) one might still object, even granting all this, that the "law" in question does not furnish proper grounds for claiming the primacy of the technological vis à vis the economic factor in the Marxian schema. For even if there is this law-like dependency for change of an economic order on technological causation, one might want to argue that the same holds for Marx the other way round: that is, changes in technological stage also always depend on economic causation. Marx held, in other words, this rebuttal might go, a typically dialectical position here, viewing changes in technological stage as just as dependent



on economic cause as -- conversely -- changes in economic form on technological cause. Hence to suggest that there is for him primacy of one or the other factor in this regard is, this counter might conclude, a frontal mistake.

To which I briefly reply -- while I agree that Marx often indicates economic causation of technological change (e.g. capitalist competition causing the invention and introduction of labour-saving machinery), he nowhere claims this etiological pattern to be universally or even generally the case: whereas he does say that no economic order changes without technological cause. Indeed Marx frequently and explicitly cites such non-economic phenomena as geographical challenge and population growth as causes of productive force development or change. So, it would seem, dialectic here stops decisively short of lawfulness for him. The technological factor does in the end own authentic primacy in the specific respect claimed.

As I have already indicated of i to iv above it is iii (albeit involving discrimination between cases of "fettering" and "forfeit" which Marx does not pursue and which, besides, does not support his prediction of the overthrow of capitalism) which provides the really fundamental principle of technological primacy in the Marxian schema. It is in accordance with this "law" -- that is, in its most general form, in accordance with the "law" that the stage of development of productive forces is never forfeited by a society -- that economic and indeed all other sociohistorical phenomena may

be said to be "determined" by the technological "base". The latter, the stage of development of productive forces, is that to which all else must comply or be "selected out", whether economic order or anything else. (It is worth pointing out, before concluding this part (e), to how great an extent I have tampered with Marx's position in my formulation of this fundamental "law" of technological primacy and determinism. I have already acknowledged that Marx makes no explicit distinction between "fettering" and "forfeit" and that such a distinction, as I use it, bears in its wake the crucial consequence of significantly disabling his most famous prediction. Nevertheless I think it can be properly claimed that all my tampering amounts to with respect to the principle in question is selection of one of its two versions, which Marx wrongly conflates: a selection which plumps for the stricter version implied in The Poverty of Philosophy passages cited above and which, by so doing, allows (as Marx himself does on occasions other than his predictions of the imminent overthrow of advanced capitalism) for cases where the economic order "fetters" the stage of development of productive forces but does not on that account alone suffer dissolution and/or revolution. In short, my tampering does not alter Marx's position here, I think, so much as refine it to the extent of rejecting one looser version to which he only seems committed in his celebrated prophecies of the impending doom of mature capitalism).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>This "refinement" still permits, of course, the prediction that the advanced capitalist order will be dissolved/revolutionized once the situation is reached where either it or the stage of      cont'd

To this point, to sum up, I have attended to the principal relationship of what I have called Marx's "technological determinism": the relationship of correspondence between a society's stage of development of productive forces and its relations of production/Economic Structure. I have suggested that this relationship of correspondence obtains in terms of a (hitherto unformulated) set of four principles, and that the stage of development of productive forces owns the status of primacy, of "base" in the relationship by virtue of essentially the "law" that it is never forfeited by a society (whereas the economic order is, when either it or the former must go). I have also suggested, finally, that it is in terms of this "law" of technological stage preservation that the productive forces may be said to determine all else: that is, whatever in a

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development of productive forces must be forfeited to maintain technological-economic correspondence. All it rules out is this prediction by virtue of the former's merely "fettering" the latter. If, for example, the situation arose -- by virtue of a successful general strike or the introduction of radically new methods of productive co-operation or corporate ruin of natural resources or whatever -- such that either its technological stage or its capitalist order had to be sacrificed by a society, then the prediction of an "inevitable" revolution against the economic order in question would be justified, according to my account. But such a situation does not seem as a matter of fact to have obtained during or since Marx's time in Western Europe or North America.

The implication of all this for a Marxian revolutionary strategy is crucial. If my 'refinement' is granted, then the way a revolution against advanced capitalism must proceed is through engineering -- or waiting for -- this situation where either technological stage or economic order has to be forfeited: revolution by, say, seizure and consolidation of state power alone must prove abortive -- lacking as it does, if my account here is accepted, the required material conditions for success.



society is not compatible or does not correspond with the preservation of the stage of development of its productive forces is "selected out" (including, most importantly, the economic order itself). Just as, to follow Marx's own course of metaphor, the human individual might be said to be governed before all else by the natural law to preserve his own "organs" of person, so the human collective-society might be said to be governed before all else by the historical law to preserve its own "organs" of technology. That everything in a society thus conforms to the preservation of its technological stage, of its "productive organs" (CI, 372) is not only the "law" whereby Marx explains the dissolution and/or revolution of the economic order itself, but also the "law" by virtue of which he judges utopian communes, return to craft-labour, romantic anarchism and so on as historical impossibilities -- to identify just a few of the cases in which he seems most plainly to invoke it. All in all, it seems for Marx -- to release still further into the liberties of metaphor -- that technology has replaced Divine Will as the ultimate arbitrator of history, fating whatever does not conform to its dictates to death or ruin -- with Marx as the secular prophet of its design. Only here Marx truly "descends from heaven to earth". Man, not God, is the Maker. And historical praxis, not supernatural grace, is the agency of salvation.

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Having schematized in general terms the essential principles of what I have called "technological determinism" in Marx's theory, I will

move now to other less central sorts of determining influence which the productive forces are occasionally suggested by Marx to exert. I have already discussed in my section on "Human Nature", and elsewhere, the relationship Marx posits between men's needs and capacities and the forces of production. So there is no need to recount here how he sees the latter as expressing capacities and answering needs and, in so doing, "determining" (or, "making determinate") such needs and capacities in dialectical turn. This is not to deny that the prospects for working through this line of thought, for exploring the full richness and complexity of the mutually determining relationship suggested by Marx between the productive forces and human nature, are extremely inviting. In the human-nature/productive force dialectic, after all, lies for Marx the essential process of man's self-making: and in its explication may also lie one of the most promising frontiers of investigation opened by his thought (partially pursued by, for example, contemporary McLuhanism):

For not only the five senses but also the so-called mental senses -- the practical senses (will, love, etc.) -- in a word human sense -- the humanness of the senses comes to be by virtue of its object, by virtue of humanized nature [i.e. production]: The forming of the five senses is a labour of the entire history of the world down to the present (Marx's emphases: EPM, 108).

Nevertheless I shall not cultivate my discussion of this area -- however fecund -- beyond the outline I have already provided of the general principles of Marx's treatment. I shall confine myself at this point to considering briefly -- and with this my exposition of Marx's "technological determinism" ends -- several as yet undiscussed

sorts of determining influence Marx suggests or implies the forces of production to have with respect to the elements of the superstructure. Marx does not say very much in this connection, and what he does say is elliptical and desultory, but the following two general principles would seem to adequately cover the substance of his various ad hoc comments:

a) The methods of the forces of production of a society "map onto" the methods of the legal and political superstructure and ideology.

For example, he says in Capital:

The principle, carried out in the factory system of analysing the process of production into its constituent phases ... becomes the determining principle everywhere. (CI, 461)

And he says in A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy:

There is in every social formation a particular branch of production which determines ... all other branches as well. It is as though light of a particular hue were cast upon everything tingeing all other colours and modifying their specific features. (CPE, 212)

Though in neither case above does he explicitly develop the force of "everything" beyond merely other materially productive sectors, it seems reasonable to infer that part of what he meant by his celebrated Preface remark -- "The mode of production of material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life" -- was this "mapping" of the methods of production onto the superstructure. (e.g. The method of the capitalist forces of production of "analyzing into constituent phases" is mapped onto its state bureaucracy and modes of publication which reflect just this method in their progressive resolution of legal, political and ideological



processes into assembly-line-like series of detail functions).

b) Practical control achieved by the forces of production displaces supernatural control by mythical forces in the society's ideology. For example, Marx says in A Contribution to the Critique Of Political Economy:

All mythology subdues, controls and fashions the forces of nature in the imagination and through imagination; it disappears therefore when real control over these forces is established. What becomes of Fama side by side with Printing House Square? ... is Achilles possible when powder and shot have been invented?  
(CPE, 216)

It is by virtue of this principle of technological control displacing supernatural control in a society's ideology that Marx counts such things as the British conquest of India and the victory of the bourgeoisie over feudalism as historically progressive: that is, the technological advances which were introduced by the victors in these cases rid the societies concerned of ancient superstitions "enslaving" public consciousness and, for this, as well as simple increased production of the material means of life, the brutal takeovers in question were in his view steps forward in the onerous labour of human history. (Though the paradoxical possibility of technology itself in some way taking on the status of a mythical force -- "There is no problem technology cannot solve" -- in a society's ideology, and thereby in a sense dissolving one sort of superstition in favour of another, is never considered by Marx: a further example perhaps, of his uncritical temper with respect to the development of productive forces).

I have come now to the end of my account of Marx's so-called

"technological determinism". The real substance of this determinism, I repeat, obtains for Marx with respect to the relationship of "correspondence" between the productive forces "basis" and the production relations/Economic Structure, a correspondence which obtains in terms of four essential principles and, in cases of non-resolvable non-correspondence or "contradiction" (one or the other having to be "forfeited") is ultimately re-established again in favour of technological preservation on a "higher" level, through the mediation of superstructural class struggle. However I have also identified other less central sorts of "determining" influence by the forces of production -- on "human nature", and on the elements of the superstructure. As far as any unifying sense to this whole conceptual complex of "technological determinism", it would seem to be simply that the stage of development of productive forces exerts systematic (i.e. in terms of definite general principles) and over-riding (i.e. the stage of development of productive forces is never forfeited by a society, but whatever does not comply with it is forfeited) influence on the rest of the factors of Marx's sociohistorical ontology. The only real ambiguity here, as I've already pointed out, is the question of whether the technological or the human-natural factor is for Marx really primary.

Before closing, this latter point warrants perhaps some further comment from a perspective embracing Marx's great corpus as a whole. There is a radical change of emphasis by Marx in the development of his social philosophy after 1845. Up <sup>until</sup> The German Ideology --

most strikingly in the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts -- his concern is with man's nature and its material fulfillment, and he deplores the capitalist economic order most for its systematic violations and repressions in this regard. Here the technological factor is viewed as the "open book of man's essential powers, the exposure to the senses of human psychology" (EPM, 109) and is valued as such, in terms of the realization of human nature. In his mature work, however, though as I argue he maintains his concept of man's nature and continues to view the forces of production as its materialized realization, his concern with man's nature and its violations and repressions by the capitalist economic order is generally worked out in terms of the realization of technology, condemned because it derogates in various ways from the productive forces of labour-power and thereby from technological development. (e.g. The riveting of men to detail-functions must be replaced, for Marx, not so much because it is an offence to human nature, but because in such offence it fails to utilize labour-power properly for technological development). Wrongs to man's nature are now, it seems, subordinate to wrongs to man's technology. Now this is an appropriate shift in Marx's thought, inasmuch as (among other reasons) his post-1845 praxis epistemology commits him to a concern with what men materially do rather than what they constitutionally are; while at the same time the basic "law" of history for him in his mature writings is that the stage of development of a society's productive forces is preserved before all else. Furthermore, since Marx regards man's technology as



in a sense simply his historically acquired "organs", the shift in emphasis onto them rather than man's nature is in a way merely the extension of his former central concern. The primacy of one or the other's requirements is thus kept ambiguous. It certainly seems that the stage of development of productive forces is (and ought to be) for the mature Marx the legislator for mankind; but the interests of such technological stage are for him so intimately bound up with the interests of human nature that the distinction between them that is required to decisively answer the question of which of these two in his view ultimately prevails (or ought to prevail) simply cannot be elicited from his texts. It is kept as it were in a kind of philosophical limbo which, to animate into issue, requires movement beyond his stated position. Such a movement, among others, I shall briefly initiate in the following pages.

## BOOK 2

DOMINATION AND LIBERATION:  
BEYOND THE MARXIAN PARADIGM

In the foregoing pages, my enterprise has been to provide an embracing if highly compressed exposition of what I have called "the structure of Marx's world-view": an exposition which, in attempt at least, penetrates beneath the ubiquitous profusion of Marx's written vision of the human condition to a precise framework of underlying concepts and principles. In so doing, I have met I think the complex of well-known objections (cited in my introduction) to the putatively irredeemable vagueness and confusion of his system's general categories and relationships. But this latter has been subservient satisfaction to my much more general and systematic goal: to clarify and organize into integrated explicit structure that labyrinthine -- to use Marx's own phrase -- "guiding thread", which may so easily lose us in confoundment with its fleeting twists and turns through almost every corridor of historical social experience.

Now my concern is both more specific and more critical. I want to argue that Marx's general theoretical framework is inadequate at the very core of its greatest concern (and, indeed, world-historical influence) -- inadequate, that is, in its grasp



of domination and liberation. While I certainly believe Marx's highly developed notion of a work-and-marketplace ruling-class economic structure makes one of the greatest contributions in Western intellectual history to our understanding of the former (domination), and his complementary notion of praxis struggle against this ruling-class order a similarly important contribution to our understanding of the latter (liberation), I also believe that the confinement of his analysis to the work-and-marketplace sphere of domination and liberation alone renders his system in the end crucially incomplete in its comprehension. And my concern here is not merely academic. Insofar as there is with Marx this narrowness of purview with respect to domination and liberation, insofar as such narrowness is translated -- as it progressively is -- into the materialized form of social practice across the earth, and insofar as this translation itself plausibly represents itself as the most advanced and systematic movement against domination and for liberation in human history -- the issues in question are of paramount practical import. Indeed it is my own pragmatist criterion of, if not truth, problematic which above all commands the present line of inquiry -- I am not able to think here of another domain of investigation where there is more at stake.

At the same time, on the purely ad hominem level, there seems a deeply authoritarian streak to Marx himself which must provoke interest when juxtaposed with his profound written concern with the passage of mankind from a situation of domination to one of

liberation. Marx's disposition to take control of every situation of which he was part, his intolerance of any who opposed him, his love of discipline and plan, his peculiar contempt for anarchists, his celebration of "weakness" in women, his great esteem for the genocidal advances of West European "civilization" and so on -- these and other propensities bespeak, I think, an ambivalence at the very core of the man about dominion and liberty. There is, one almost wants to say, a Marxist personality-type of which Marx sets the archetypal pattern -- authoritarian in the name of freedom: with the domination from which liberation is sought sufficiently distanced and fixated to avoid the travails of self-examination.

But enough of preface. To come straight to the point, it seems to me that Marx posits essentially the following principles of domination and liberation respectively.

1) One group of people (the ruling-class) have monopoly ownership of the material means of life of a society while another group (the ruled-class) have little or no ownership of the material means of life of that society.

2) The ruling-class (individually and/or collectively) exchanges some portion of the material means of life they own in return for some substantial portion of the ruled class's life-activity (individually and/or collectively) in conformity with the former's dictation.

3) Liberation obtains insofar as this ruling-class monopoly ownership (1) and this dictatorial mode of exchange (2) are respectively replaced by communal ownership and socially planned work (during an

ever shortening working-day made possible by ever higher stages of development of the productive forces).

Now (1) and (2) -- the essential principles of domination for Marx -- do not only apply to owners and labourers in the work-and-marketplace, as Marx's virtually exclusive concern with this sphere would seem to indicate. They apply as well, and perhaps more decisively, to other spheres of social intercourse than work-and-marketplace: for example, to adults and youth, or (with increasing exception) to men and women. Adults have monopoly ownership of the material means of life of a society and they (implicitly or explicitly) exchange some portion of these means of life in return for youths' life-activity executed in conformity with their (the adults') dictation. Much the same could be said of men and women (certainly up until and during Marx's time). So why does Marx only seriously attend to one sphere of domination when his principles of the same (as I conceptualize them in (1) and (2))' apply at least as powerfully elsewhere? And, furthermore, would not this apparently inadequate application of his own principles of domination correspondingly limit the reach of his ideas of liberation, insofar as the latter are worked out in terms of the former? In short, has not Marx gravely failed to pursue the logic of his own position here?

One immediate response to this line of criticism might be that Marx does not in fact fail to take into account these other spheres of domination in his analysis, but does in fact refer to them occasionally and only downplays their consideration because he sees



them as wholly dependent on the work-and-marketplace sphere of domination for their existence. As so dependent, he properly refuses them distinct concern or treatment.

This counter though does not bear much scrutiny. First of all, it is not true that Marx ever mentions an adult ruling-class pattern -- talk of such would probably have struck him as merely odd (for reasons that will emerge soon) and though he does allude here and there to the male ruling-class pattern -- maybe half a dozen lines in his entire corpus -- his remarks indicate an extremely meagre grasp of the problem (as contemporary women-libbers have increasingly drawn to our attention). Secondly, though it seems fair to say that he supposed any other forms of domination (recognized or not) as wholly dependent for their existence on the work-and-marketplace form of domination, he nowhere demonstrates this to be the case. Rather, at most, he draws merely ad hoc connections. But since the dependency in question is by no means self-evident (it seems perfectly plausible for an adult or male or indeed some other ruling-class pattern -- racial perhaps? -- to obtain without a ruling-class pattern of the sort Marx is concerned with: say, adult male communism with women and youth as ruled classes), we are left with only a monolithic assumption in this regard. The dependency of other ruling-class patterns on the work-and-marketplace ruling-class pattern is more or less just taken for granted with virtually no support at all given by Marx to sustain the supposition.<sup>1</sup> And

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<sup>1</sup>Engels seems to try to give some sort of support to the idea that the man/woman structure of domination is dependent on the --

even if there were such support and the dependency in question was shown -- which it is not -- it could still be the case that such dependency was reciprocal -- or interdependency -- with the work-and-marketplace structure of domination as dependent for its existence on other structures of domination (e.g. adult and male) as vice-versa. Furthermore, even if this problem were resolved by Marx -- which, again, it is not -- and the latter ruling-class patterns were truly shown to be dependent for their existence on the former and not vice-versa, even then his extrusion of these presumably derivative orders of domination from serious consideration still does not seem justified: for, despite any such proven derivative status, they still remain crucial and persistent forms of the sociohistorical process which Marx's overview, to be adequate, would have to include within its framework of sociohistorical explanation (as, say, additional important elements of a more complex Economic Structure). But I have granted Marx successful steps in argument which he never takes and which, I believe, are not securable in any case. He simply does not anywhere demonstrate -- nor do I think he could -- the

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work-and-marketplace structure of domination in his The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow). But Engels is not Marx, though commentators seem often to suppose the contrary. And Engels' argument seems to miss the nature of the man/woman order of domination almost altogether anyway. For example, he construes women's liberation under socialism as essentially a matter of her being able "to give herself freely to the man she loves" (my emphasis: p. 124). This is rather like arguing that a slave's subjugation must end when he can "give himself" to the master of his choice. So introducing Engels' position to this issue hardly lets Marx off the hook here: it gaffes him.

dependency for existence of such other ruling-class patterns as I have indicated meet his own principles (e.g. adult and male) on the work-and-marketplace ruling-class pattern which commands all his attention. He either misses such other structures of domination altogether (e.g. adult vis à vis youth) or assumes them in passing mention as dependent (e.g. man vis à vis woman), with no substantive argument to support his supposition. Of course, this failure to bring such other crucial structures of domination into his framework except at most by blanket and unjustified assumption of their dependency for existence on the work-and-marketplace structure of domination not only seriously curtails his grasp of forms of domination, but ipso facto his grasp of liberation from these latter too. His "realm of freedom" -- as quite consistent with, say, an adult and/or male ruling-class -- is hardly then the vision of ultimate liberation it promises to be. Some groups of society may still hold monopoly ownership of the material means of life and the power to dictate to members of other groups which such monopoly ownership permits. Only one such structure of domination has been surpassed, even in Marx's most utopian projection of human liberty.

Another rebuttal of this line of argument though might mount a much more frontal attack than the first and insist that the essential principles of domination I here impute to Marx and then turn against him miss the very core of his own position. That is, he was concerned with the extraction of surplus labour from productive workers by a minority of society through the power to starve etc.



the former for any refusal to go along with such arrangements. On the other hand, the structures of domination or ruling-class patterns I identify by putative use of his own principles involve none of surplus-labour extraction, productive workers, minority of rulers nor power to starve etc. into submission. My whole line of argument thus fails by substantive omission from the outset.

Well, I could attempt to show that the adult or male ruling-class patterns I single out do in fact involve these things, apart from the minority idea. Thus, for example, I think it might be successfully argued that the male ruling-class has historically extracted surplus labour from the female ruled class who are at the same time productive workers. They are productive because they typically perform a host of tasks (e.g. transportation and preparation of food, clothing, dwelling etc. need-objects for present labour-power, similar servicing, reproduction and upbringing of future labour-power, and so on) which are necessary factors in any society's material production and reproduction process. And surplus-labour seems extracted from them at least as much as the work-and-marketplace labourer insofar as they labour at these productive tasks as long or longer per week or year for as little or less payment in return. (i.e. Compare the value of what would have to be paid today to proletarians to perform all the productive tasks of a household to the value in mere subsistence goods which a wife/mother in fact receives for the performance of such tasks). Then as far as the ruling-class's power to starve etc. the ruled class into submission,

the male ruling-class has historically had pretty well as much power vis à vis the female class as slave-owners, feudal lords or capitalists have had vis à vis the working class. -- When for instance slaveholders held the power of life and death over their slaves (pristine patria potestas) so too did males have similar power over their wives by the same inclusive potestas. And ever since, any modification of this power of the male ruling-class has been more or less matched, if not exceeded, by similar modification (before or after) of such power of the work-and-marketplace ruling-class. So, with the exception of the ruling-class being a minority in the latter case, and not in the former, the structures of domination in question are more or less as symmetrical in the further respects raised by this second rebuttal as they are in respect to the essential principles of domination with which I began.

This sort of counter though might prima facie appear much less easily sustained in the case of the adult ruling-class vis à vis the youth ruled class. The latter does not seem, unlike the female ruled class, to be productive nor to have surplus-labour extracted from its members: although one could argue against this that the youth class is as productive as other technologically indispensable raw materials are (i.e. "raw" youth is to mature labour-power as raw minerals are to completed machines); and one might even argue, furthermore, that this youth class yields at least as much surplus-labour -- in its own formation into such mature labour-power -- as any other ruled class (i.e. all the hours of youth are under adult

command in this working-up into mature labour-power, in return for the barest means of life the latter chooses to grant). Then, so far as the adult class's historical power to starve etc. members of the youth class into submission, here there seems no question of having to invoke any such ingenious arguments. When the slave-owner had the power of life and death over his slave and the male similar power over his wife, so too did the father have this power over his children: and, again, the modification of this inclusive power of paterfamilias in subsequent historical societies does not seem to have been any greater with respect to the youth ruled class than with respect to Marx's working class or indeed the female class. Perhaps less. So again, the structure of domination or ruling-class pattern in question -- adult vis à vis youth -- continues to resemble to some significant extent at least the ruling-class order to which Marx more or less limits his attention. Certainly, there is much more across-the-board similarity with respect to the productivity, surplus-labour yield and relative powerlessness of the various ruled classes than the rebuttal in question can allow to secure its point.

However, a stronger and simpler counter to this rebuttal -- at least that part of it which refers to the issues of productivity and surplus-labour -- is that it is irrelevant to the question of domination. That is, it makes no whit of difference so far as domination is concerned whether or not the party who is being dominated is materially productive or yields surplus-labour. These are questions which pertain to exploitation, not to domination. If



someone were to claim, for example, that a domestic pet was any the less an object of domination because it was not productive and/or did not yield surplus-labour, the claim would be patently ignoratio elenchi. So too, to bring these issues to bear on the present area of inquiry is similarly irrelevant. I think it is clear that Marx, and Marxists, have themselves failed to make this crucial distinction between domination and exploitation and, that indeed, Marx attended to the so-called work-and-marketplace structure of domination so one-sidedly because it exhibited the additional quality of exploitation more obviously than the other such structures which I have been insisting upon: this concern with domination and with distributive injustice seem for him inextricably bound up with one another. But whether or not Marx is thus confused, the point remains that domination is distinct from exploitation and that these issues of productivity and/or surplus-labour yield are relevant to the latter but not to the former.

The same cannot be said of the power to starve etc. into submission -- the third respect in which the rebuttal in question claims the male and adult structures of domination do not measure up to Marx's work-and-marketplace structure of domination. Such power is quite obviously relevant to the question of domination: it relates directly to the principles of monopoly ownership of the means of life and the dictatorial exchange such monopoly permits. But I have already argued that there is in historical fact a striking similarity in this respect among the various structures of domination in question:

the male and the adult ruling-class having had since ancient times just about as much power to starve etc. into submission the female and the youth ruled class respectively as the ruling-class with which Marx is essentially concerned has had vis à vis the workers. So the rebuttal in question does not seem to work here either. Of course, this counter could provoke interminable empirical controversy which we have not time nor resources for here: but I still think it can be sustained every step of the way. (Let me sketch out how just a little more than I have.) Say we consider the various ruling-class patterns at issue so far as they obtain today in North America. So far as the monopoly ownership of the material means of life, the male and, much more so, the adult ruling-class have without question a far more thoroughgoing such monopoly vis à vis the female and youth ruled class than the capitalists do vis à vis the proletariat. With respect then to this first (Marxian) principle of domination, Marx's ruling-class has patently less power than the ruling classes I have identified. If anything here, the opposite to what the rebuttal claims is the case. Then so far as this power being actualized in dictatorial exchange -- the second Marxian principle of domination -- the male, and again much more so, the adult ruling-classes seem to command more of the life-activity of the female and youth ruled classes respectively by virtue of their positions of monopoly ownership than do the capitalists command of the proletariat (e.g. a youth is typically almost never outside the coercive dictate of adults whereas a worker is after 40 or so hours a week, and a youth receives

in return for his services typically far less material means of life). So here too, Marx's ruling-class of owners seems to have less (actualized) power over the proletariat than at least one of the two other ruling-classes he more or less ignores. And, I might add, in the sociohistorical context in question capitalists have no more so to say "exceptional" powers over proletarians (e.g. of starvation, of physical assault, of forced detention, etc.) than do North American adults over youth or even men over women: proletarians are effectively protected in these regards as much as (e.g. from starvation) or more than (e.g. from assault or forced detention) women or youth.<sup>2</sup> In sum, any specific differences that exist in the overall powers of the various ruling-classes at issue over their respective underclasses seem to fall more on the side of the adult and male ruling-classes than the capitalist. That youth or women almost universally regard the move from adult or male domination in the home etc. to capitalist domination in the work-and-marketplace as a liberating move is plain proof of this point: next to the servitude of the young and the female, the wage-slavery of manhood

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<sup>2</sup>Consider this summary from a legal point of view of youth's position here:

It is an anomalous and incredible fact that there is almost no case or statutory law setting forth the rights of children. -- Almost half of all Americans are under twenty-one. -- Yet even now the laws governing the treatment of animals are more specific than those with respect to children (Lois G. Forer, "Rights of Children: The Legal Vacuum", American Bar Association Journal, Vol. 55 (December 1969), 1151-2).



stands as the achievement of positive freedom. The same kind of case could be mounted I suspect with respect to the Europe of Marx's own day, or of mediaeval times, or indeed of any other sociohistorical context. Here too the work-and-marketplace structure of domination could be shown as, if anything, less thoroughgoing than adult/youth or men/women orders of rule.

Well, the structures of domination I have been insisting upon as meeting Marx's own principles of such as well as or better than the only one he pays serious attention to (i.e. the so-called work-and-marketplace structure of domination) seem so far to have stood the test of rebuttal. But I have still not coped with certain special properties of the latter which might yet appear to justify Marx's more or less exclusive concern with it. First of all, there is the fact that it alone involves a clear minority of society in the position of ruling-class and, correspondingly, a clear majority in the position of ruled-class (though other possible structures of domination which I have not gone into -- for example, racial -- may also involve this sort of minority rule). Secondly, and more significantly I think, there is the fact that it involves the uppermost ruling-class of society ---- Members of its ruling-class alone are not subject to the domination (in the Marxian sense) of any other ruling-class (e.g. members of the adult and male ruling-classes in a capitalist order are subject to domination by capitalists, but the latter are not so subject to domination by any other ownership class).

What in the end, however, can be inferred from these admittedly special and even important features of the work-and-market-place structure of domination? Certainly not, I think, the propriety of attending to it more or less exclusively as a structure of domination or of assuming its overthrow as the sufficient condition of a "realm of freedom". To reason in this way, as Marx seems at least implicitly to do, seems rather like the blinkered ratiocination of the 18th century bourgeois republicans -- whom he himself so robustly despised -- who imagined that the royal court's domination was the only form of domination worth attending to and whose overthrow would guarantee a utopian realm of "liberty and equality". For in this latter case, the ruling-class in question was even more clearly both a minority and the uppermost ruling-class of the society in question. And since its removal was according to Marx's own assessment quite consistent with various forms of domination continuing in force anyway, what makes him think or presume that the removal of the capitalist class will ensure a "realm of freedom" by virtue of its being simply the minority and uppermost ruling-class of his period? These special features give no warrant it seems for such a sanguine inference, either in the eighteenth century or in the nineteenth or after. Just as a new ruling-class replaced the royal court in the "Age of Reason" and other structures of domination persisted quite intact despite this revolutionary overthrow, so we might expect a new ruling-class (e.g. state administrators) to replace the capitalists in the "Age of Automation" with, again, other structures of

domination persisting through such revolutionary overthrow unabated (e.g. the adult-youth structure of domination continuing as before and even intensifying in the form of authoritarian schools, regimented youth corps and so on). The fact that a ruling-class is specially a minority and the uppermost ruling-class of its day would not appear at all to justify Marx's more or less exclusive concern with it as an order of domination whose overthrow must somehow constitute the be-all and end-all of social liberation.

This sort of counter though is not fully fair to Marx's position. He did insist upon more than merely the overthrow of the capitalist ruling-class: he insisted upon the overthrow of the so-called work-and-marketplace structure of domination altogether, though I must add there is a more than a little conflation of specific and general here in his work. But let us overlook this and related problems for the purpose of argument -- despite what I think is the great mistake of such a grant -- and presume with Marx that the work-and-marketplace structure of domination does disappear altogether with the overthrow of the capitalist ruling-class and that no new ruling-class order in this sphere arises with the social ownership of the material means of production involved. Let us, in short, give Marx his case so far as this one sphere of domination is concerned, even though we might think it just a little less blinkered in its way than bourgeois republicanism. This given, we now re-ask whether the fact that the ruling-class in question is specially a minority and the uppermost ruling-class can justify Marx's more or



less singular attention to it as a structure of domination. The only faintly plausible argument that I can think of off-hand for supposing that even here Marx's preoccupation is thus warranted is along the lines of a "domino theory" plea. Crudely put, knock over the "uppermost" domino and the rest will follow suit: the work-and-marketplace ruling-class is alone distinguished by virtue of the position of domination its members have with respect to the members of any and all other ruling-classes, so its overthrow must uniquely carry down onto these other ruling-classes and all of them, as it were, must fall down in a collapsing line of command. Unhappily though this kind of argument is simply not sustainable. To begin with -- problems of metaphorical appeal aside -- the uppermost ruling-class here is not in a position of domination with respect to other ruling-class members so far as these latter are themselves rulers. For example, the father exerts monopoly ownership over the material means of life of his wife and (more so) his children and is able thereby to exact life-activity in conformity with his dictates independently of the capitalist's position of domination over him. Members of the work-and-marketplace ruling-class are in a position to dominate (in the sense employed here) only in the sphere of work-and-marketplace and what their subordinates do in their own spheres of domination as members of adult and/or male ruling-classes is quite outside the former's realm of command. (e.g. a capitalist cannot dictate to his worker how the latter is to relate to his children, whatever he may dictate to the latter on the job). Distinct ownership

structures are involved -- with members of the male and/or adult ruling-classes having monopoly ownership and (thereby) power of dictatorial exchange vis à vis female and/or youth ruled classes whatever members of the work-and-marketplace ruling-class may command there. Indeed the effective ownership relations involved in the male and adult structures of domination -- and thus their independence qua proprietary jurisdictions from work-and-marketplace or any other sort of intervention -- are as definitively protected in a modern order by the whole coercive superstructural mechanism of police, army, courts, etc. as the effective ownership relations of the capitalists themselves. Thus, for example, were a capitalist to attempt (and the sheer unlikelihood of such an event reinforces the claim) to subvert the domination structure of a worker-father vis à vis his non-adult son by breaking the former's monopoly ownership over the latter's material means of life (say, by receiving or harbouring the son with food and lodging elsewhere), his action would be as liable to criminal prosecution as the worker-father attempting to steal the capitalists' machinery. In fact, there is an asymmetry to the protection of independent effective ownership relations here which tells in favour of the adult-youth structure of domination as -- at least in this case -- considerably more extreme than the work-and-marketplace structure of domination. That is, the youth here is himself, in the Marxian sense, owned by his worker-father whereas the latter is not so owned by the capitalist. It is not merely the case that a member of the uppermost ruling-class and a member of the adult ruling-class have

mutually independent monopoly-ownership relations to the material means of life of those they respectively dominate (though even here the latter's such monopoly is considerably more thoroughgoing than the former's), but the case that the adult's effective ownership extends in addition to the very person of the dominated party whereas the work-and-marketplace structure of domination involves no such totalization of ruling-class ownership power.

However, leaving aside such further points of asymmetry, it seems we may conclude here that there is no "line of command" from the work-and-marketplace structure of domination through other structures of domination (i.e. adult-youth, man-woman) such that the latter can be said to be dependent on the former for their being upheld or for their being overthrown. The various structures in question involve, as we have seen, independent ownership relations, independent material interests: and, for Marx himself, that's independence at the "base". The "domino theory" of structures of domination seems rebutted by his own most fundamental principle of sociohistorical analysis.

If though, to approach this issue of Marx's peculiarly exclusive concern with the work-and-marketplace structure of domination from a somewhat different angle, the latter really was more or less the only set of material relations warranting Marx's concern (despite all that has been said above), then we would expect that from more or less its relations alone we could develop superstructural content. For Marx says that the "only materialistic and therefore



the only scientific method" is "to develop from the actual relations of life the corresponding celestialized forms of these relations" (CI, 372). (Here Marx is referring particularly to "religious conceptions".)

It is worth recalling the principles cited in my chapter "Economic Determinism" to explain how such a "development from the actual relations of life" to "corresponding celestialized forms" might proceed. A definite range or "limited field" of ideological possibilities can be developed from the economic order by what I called then the principle of "Social Selection", and the specific ideological content within this range or "limited field" can in turn be developed from the economic order by what I called then the principle of "mapping" (though this latter procedure is rather inadequately characterized by Marx). But since it seems quite impossible to develop from work-and-marketplace relations alone, say, the fundamental religious conceptions of almighty God as the Father, passive Virgin Mary as the Mother, crucified Jesus as the Son, and so on, there must be some material relations other than work-and-marketplace ones constituting the real "base" from which the conceptions in question might be properly derived. Obviously, the adult-youth and man-woman structures of domination provide just such sets of material relations. And just as obviously, these sets of material relations must have for Marx as central a role in the "base" as they do in the superstructure, if the "correspondence" between these social factors which Marx persistently claims is to be upheld. So it would

seem, yet again, that by Marx's very own principles the adult-youth and man-woman structures of domination warrant a concern on a par with the work-and-marketplace structure of domination: which he, nevertheless, does not accord them. However we look at the matter, it seems, his extrusion from consideration of the former ruling-class orders does not seem justifiable. Indeed on several counts so far, it would appear that Marx is verging on central self-contradiction. His whole work focuses on the work-and-marketplace order as somehow the order of domination to be seriously reckoned with in a materialist and revolutionary analysis of the historical human condition, and yet the very most crucial principles of his own such analysis point to other orders of domination as of similar significance and even determining import. The inadequacy of his purview of domination and liberation comes close now it seems -- implicitly at least -- to the more serious philosophical sin of incoherence.

Two final points, however, require some airing before closing this discussion of other structures of domination which Marx -- improperly and even inconsistently, if I am right -- more or less ignores in his work in his preoccupation with the ruling-class order of work-and-marketplace. The first arises from a suggestion I made earlier about female and youth activity which is dictated by male and adult ruling-classes respectively qualifying possibly as productive activity. If this suggestion is accepted as true, then one might argue for a dependency of the structures of domination concerned on the work-and-marketplace structure of domination by virtue of the former as it were

merely servicing the latter with unpaid and concealed productive labour. In this case, it could be held, the male and adult ruling-classes come out as merely ruling for the work-and-marketplace ruling-class: dictating to woman and youth respectively as so to say covert domestic-labour managers of the "uppermost" social bosses (i.e. in modern times, the capitalists). A counter to this sort of line of argument, however, is that it is in the Marxian sense an utterly baseless (though common) assertion to relate the ruling-classes in this way: the "uppermost" ruling-class have, as I have shown, no ownership relations within or over the so-called domestic-factory that enable them to exact obedience from the male or adult ruling-class members with respect to the latter's domination of women and youth. Such structures of domination involve, as I have already pointed out, independent ownership relations not subject to the "uppermost" ruling-class's sway; and insofar as their male and/or adult ruling-class members exact obedient life-activity -- productive or otherwise -- from women and/or youth class members, they do so by virtue of their own ownership relations without command or power of command in this respect from the work-and-marketplace ruling-class. That is why the present strategy of some avant garde women liberationists -- to demand a wage from capital for their domestic services -- is fundamentally reactionary: it brings the "uppermost" structure of domination into the home where effective relations of ownership among family members have hitherto been independent and where, as thus independent, broad revolutionary liberation might otherwise most



suitably start.

The second point I wish to raise briefly here arises from Marx's concept of human nature and its relationship to his concept of domination. I think it might be properly held that it is because man for Marx is in essence a being who has the capacity/need to raise a project in the imagination and then execute it in reality that he (Marx) regards domination as evil. That is, insofar as domination entails the dictation of some's life-activity by others, it militates against the very essential creative nature of those who are dominated: and it is ultimately on this human-natural ground that Marx opposes himself to domination. If, on the other hand, this line of thought might go, there were cases of domination consistent with, or even enabling of, the fulfillment of man's essential need/capacity to raise and implement projects, then the domination in question would not be opposed by Marx but accepted (by virtue of its harmony with the realization of human nature). And given all this, the argument might continue, might not the good reason for Marx's extrusion from consideration of the adult-youth structure of domination be simply that here domination is "consistent with, and even enabling of" the fulfillment of the human essence? Youth are dominated, that is, as a sort of indispensable training period to the status of humanity which they do not qua youth possess. Domination does not here thus inhibit the fulfillment of man's nature but promotes it and, as such, is properly excluded by Marx from critical concern.

Well, to this sort of defence of Marx I can only reply that

precisely the same argument could be employed against his own preoccupation with the work-and-marketplace structure of domination. Everything that has been said of the youth class above could be said with as good reason (i.e. not much) about the working class, and critical concern with their domination could thereby just as plausibly or implausibly be rationalized away. Indeed mainstream political philosophy since Plato has for the most part taken this position -- Marx perhaps the only notable exception -- with respect to members of the working class: they require domination for their own good. So it is by no means obvious that there is any better case for saying that members of the youth class have not the capacity/need for projective self-actualization -- though most adults might, as other ruling-class memberships, conveniently assume otherwise about the nature of those they dominate -- than there is for generalizing the same claim and conclusions therefrom about the working class. To defend Marx's neglect in prosecuting the adult/youth structure of domination on such grounds is thus to invite precisely the same argument against his preoccupation with prosecuting the work-and-marketplace structure of domination. And this in the end is no defence at all.

To this point, I have been considering domination pretty well solely in terms of Marx own principles of sociohistorical analysis and have argued that these principles pick out other structures of domination than the so-called work-and-marketplace ruling-class order to which he more or less exclusively attends: which other structures

of domination, I have also argued, cannot be properly ignored -- as, say, somehow wholly dependent for their existence or liberation on the former's existence or liberation. The implication throughout has been that insofar as Marx does almost entirely and without good warrant overlook these other structures of domination, he fails crucially and by his own principles to comprehend the full range of domination informing man's sociohistorical condition; and ipso facto fails as well, to the same extent, to comprehend the full extension of human liberation requisite to a "realm of freedom". Now before pressing my argument to still further structures of domination which I also hold Marx importantly fails to take account of in his world-view, I would like first to suggest how the acknowledgment of these other structures of domination I have already identified must radically broaden and enrich any enterprise of revolutionary liberation of the human condition that pretends to adequacy. As Marx's theory stands, revolutionary liberation is more or less a matter of altering the ruling-class pattern of work-and-marketplace relations alone. But given that there are other non-dependent structures of domination, then it would seem to follow that they too must be revolutionized to achieve a fully-blown "realm of freedom". Hence, a so to say all-fronts approach of some sort would seem required of any adequate liberative enterprise here, not one of merely singular focus -- and perhaps dwarfish issue -- as is proposed by Marx. Moreover, I would suggest -- to even further qualify Marx's position -- there are the following good reasons for holding that the more promising "front"



of engagement here from a praxis point of view is not at all the work-and-marketplace structure of domination to which Marx so exclusively attends (now referred to as A), but rather the adult-youth structure of domination to which he pays virtually no heed at all. (Now referred to as B).

1) Liberative alteration of A is a matter of fact always or nearly always accompanied for sometime by the threat or reality of retrogression in the stage of development of productive forces (from producer strike to civil war). On the other hand, liberative alteration of B is as a matter of fact not so accompanied (because, among other reasons, B does not involve direct producers). Indeed there is even a case for holding that such liberative alteration is likely to be succeeded by progression in the stage of development of productive forces as the members of the youth class in question succeed to the roles of direct producers (on the plausible and not unMarxian principle that the less adult monopoly of the young's means of life in upbringing, the more praxis access to, and thus proficiency with, the tools of existence the young will develop). In other words, liberative alteration of A is problematic and of B is not so far as immediate sustaining of the stage of development of productive forces is concerned; while so far as long-range effectiveness in promoting such stage of development, liberative alteration of B may be no less positively effective than of A. And, it might be added, it is the former, the immediate sustaining of the stage of development of productive forces that a society must always

ensure: by, it would seem, Marx's own most basic "law" of technological determinism (i.e. "a society never forfeits the fruits of civilization"). Thus the advantage of revolutionizing B because it threatens and/or involves no immediate technological retrogression, whereas revolutionizing of A does, seems a radically important advantage, in terms of Marx's own most basic principle of socio-historical analysis.

2) Liberative alteration of A and B, so far as long-range effectiveness with respect to material relations is concerned (as opposed to merely their technological stage content), is secured better through B than A insofar as B's dominated members (i.e. youth) as a rule simply live longer as social agencies than A's dominated members (i.e. workers). This greater longevity of youth class members as social agencies, and hence the longer-range impact of their liberation of B more historically adequate than of A. (Surely, again, a fundamental advantage in terms of Marx's own historical materialist principles).

3) There are praxis-blocking intractibilities to A inhibiting its liberative alteration which do not obtain to the same extent with respect to B and its liberative alteration. The following such praxis blocks, which render thus A a less promising structure than B with which to engage in liberative enterprise, are discernible by Marx's own principles:

(a) The ruling-class of A is historically governed solely by the protection and promotion of its collective material interests

(i.e. of its structure of domination), whereas the ruling-class of B is not so rigidly governed (e.g. parental love of their offspring). Hence A is more resistant to the praxis of liberative alteration than B. (I suspect that Marx and Marxists might count all this as a reason for pursuing the liberative alteration of A rather than B because A's ruling-class is, as characterized by the, more hateful and hence more important to attack than B's ruling-class. But then this position would seem to put considerations of vengeance above considerations of revolutionary success as a guide to action, which would seem in turn to introduce problems of incoherence to the Marxian program.)

(b) The dominated class of A (i.e. workers) by virtue of its members' longer domination than the dominated class of B (i.e. youth) is more subject to what Marx called "ingrained habit" with respect to such domination: "ingrained habit" which Marx himself, in a number of ways and on even a greater number of occasions, regretted or abused as a subjective impediment to the liberative alteration of the ruling-class pattern of material relations. Hence, again, A is thereby more resistant to the praxis of liberative alteration than B.

(c) Liberative alteration of A does as a matter of historical fact and Marxian precept always require the pressure of masses acting more or less in concert or otherwise put, is more or less closed off to the praxis undertakings of individuals (for a number of reasons; including (1) and (3) above as well as the great remoteness and



systematically interlocked power of the ruling-class involved). On the other hand, liberative alteration of B has no such limiting requirement of co-ordinated mass action but is on the contrary radically open to the praxis undertakings of virtually any adult individual of a society (e.g. parents), and much more open to any youth member of that society than the liberative alteration of A is to any worker. I might add here that this much greater accessibility of B (or indeed the male-female structure of domination) to liberative alteration by individual praxis is of utmost import insofar as -- to use the words (in another context) of Marx himself -- it "sets loose the whole energy of free individuality" (761, CI) for the pursuit of liberation: an energy entirely lost as such to the service of liberative alteration of A by virtue of the latter's imperative of collective action.

(I might still further add here that it is in my view the ruling-out of this "energy of free individuality", of the personal dimension, in Marx's masses-only revolutionary program that is the single greatest weakness in its potential. Not only by his program is liberative alteration thus rendered fundamentally narrower in enablement, but -- perhaps more important -- rendered somewhat contradictory in effect to what I take to be the sheer-individualism goal of Marx's entire enterprise (i.e. "the absolute elaboration of what lies within without any preconditions"). This issue is one to which I shall return.

Well, the above are some reasons why from a praxis point of

view the "more promising front" of liberative alteration of social structures of domination would seem to be B (adult-youth) rather than A (owner-worker). Several of the same arguments and others would seem to apply to the male-female structure of domination (C) vis à vis A as a similarly more promising front of liberative alteration. And, given all this, one might even want to say that were these two "more promising" fronts pursued to the full with nothing done with respect to A, the latter (as increasingly peopled with graduates of the former) would itself inevitably dissolve as a so to say ungrounded pyramid top: the dependency for existence here held as A on B and C rather than vice-versa as Marx seem to have assumed. However, I do not now wish to commit myself to this line of thought: though I do think that it is a fruitful line of inquiry, and that perhaps the most apt covering model for the various structures of domination in question is a social pyramid with A as the "uppermost" constituent of its framework.

The reason I do not wish to commit myself to this line of thought -- despite its possibly greater promise than the Marxist -- is simply that it is falsely disjunctive from the outset to suppose that one or other front of liberative alteration must be pursued -- whichever of the above is in question -- rather than all together. So far I have been merely insisting that if one or other "front" must be exclusively attended to, then the work-and-marketplace structure of domination is not obviously the most effective candidate for such an exclusive approach. But there does not seem any grounds

at all for raising the dilemma of choice between fronts of engagement to begin with. Rather I should think only an all-fronts approach provides adequate extension to the project of liberative alteration so far as the latter is itself adequately conceived. Hence my position here is not in the end to oppose Marx's ideas of revolutionary transformation of the work-and-marketplace structure of domination as authentically liberative, but rather to claim the need to radically broaden his great project of revolutionary emancipation to include other central spheres of domination to which he was more or less insensitive: and in such fundamental amplification of scope, to render this project a far grander and simultaneously more immediate enterprise than simply proletarian class politics. I am, in a phrase, trying to universalize the issues of domination and liberation and, in so doing, individualize them too (in the sense of bringing them to bear upon material relations in which virtually every individual of a society has continually the enablement for liberative undertaking).

Thus far I have been operating with the essential principles of domination supplied, or better, implied, by Marx himself and have argued that these principles not only pick out the so-called work-and-marketplace structure of domination alone attended to by Marx, but other similarly significant and non-dependent structures of domination as well: an argument which so far as it has been successful demonstrates Marx's grasp of both domination and liberation in historical society as one-sided and narrow and, at the same time,



yields a much amplified concept of communist revolution and the "realm of freedom" at which it aims. However there is still further, radical broadening in these respects which in my view Marx's theory invites: a broadening that is impelled by critical consideration of his general principles of domination themselves rather than of merely -- as so far -- their consistent application to domains other than the work-and-marketplace.

But before shifting into this new locus of inquiry, I would like to bring to light just one more central structure of domination that ultimately meets Marx's underlying essential principles of domination -- certainly he himself acknowledges it as a structure of domination -- but is uniquely regarded by him as a good thing.

Here it is not a question, as earlier, of Marx's improperly missing some central structure of domination picked out by his own most basic principles, but of his explicitly recognizing it and approving of it as a form of domination to be rendered ever more totalitarian in the course of human advancement. In this case, Marx takes the side of the oppressor, and he takes it consciously, persistently and outspokenly.

I speak of the relationship between human and non-human being, with the dominator as man and the dominated as the rest of nature's existents. That Marx does in fact recognize and approve of such a structure of domination does not even approach a question of debate. From his earliest to his latest writings one of the most prominent and insistent refrains of his thought is that man's great and

progressively realized destiny on earth is to reduce the rest of nature's being to mere instrumentality of human will: to "conquer", "subjugate", "humanize", "make organs" of, "command", "master", "force", "yoke", etc., all non-human existence ever more exhaustively to man's design till nothing remains that is not perfectly the subject of utter human dominion. This ever more absolute enslavement of the rest of being under the sway of man -- normally considered a key component of Marx's "humanism" -- might be more aptly titled his total human chauvinism (what I earlier called in Chapter I Marx's "absolute anthropocentrism"). Of course, a thoroughgoing "human chauvinism" or "anthropocentrism" is hardly atypical of the Western philosophical tradition -- it is difficult to think of even a single figure who deviates from it (though, it is worth adding, the Eastern religious philosophies of Hinduism and, even more prominently, Buddhism exhibit continual concern in their texts with the freedom from oppression of other "sentient being" than man). But Marx goes perhaps further than most in this Western tradition in his notion of nature as wholly man's object of instrumentalization: I cannot call to mind anyone who puts such explicit and exclusive emphasis on man as the so to say absolute ruling-class of the cosmos. There is no higher being or law by which he is governed or to which he is responsible in his dominion, nor does there seem any sphere of non-human being which is exempt or even partially exempt from the program of his evermore absolute rule. Marx is, in short, the ideologue par excellence of human domination of all other classes of being.

(Now though, for me anyway, this sort of unqualified commitment to total human domination perhaps most of all demonstrates Marx's seriously inadequate grasp of the full import and range of the issues of domination and liberation, it must be acknowledged that Marx cannot from this be properly held as inconsistent in his principles: that is, the apparent contradiction between his basic concern to liberatively revolutionize structures of coercion and his basic concern to promote the opposite with respect to the human nonhuman structure of coercion does not in fact hold as a contradiction. Marx's concern from the outset is explicitly with, and only with, human affairs: so any consideration of nonhuman interests is ruled out ex hypothesi. Furthermore, it seems that Marx's ultimate ground for positioning himself against domination and for liberation is essentially his concern for the unhindered material realization of projective consciousness: a concern that cannot apply to those classes of being incapable, by definition, for him, of projective consciousness: such classes of being for Marx lack by their very nature the very property which would in his schema entitle them to the enablements of liberty. So on several counts, it would seem improper to charge Marx with any kind of inconsistency in this regard. But even if his stance thus involves no internal contradiction of principles, anyone who holds such things as wilderness, free animal life or nonhuman sentience as end-in-self values must, I think, find Marx's "humanism" repugnant. Its ambit of liberative concern precludes most of the world's being, indeed condemns it to perpetual and progressive servitude under the



most murderous and destructive species ever, as a positive good. By such exclusive "humanism" Marx perhaps promotes a far more tyrannical ruling-class form than the one he is concerned to usurp).

Let us though return to that critical consideration of Marx's general principles of domination promised earlier. As I remarked then, here I wish to address myself to these principles as such rather than simply -- as so far -- to the illicit inadequacy of their recognized extension. These principles of domination were, to resuscitate my earlier characterization:

1) One group of people (the ruling-class) have monopoly ownership of the material means of life of a society while another group (the ruled-class) have little or no ownership of the material means of life of that society.

2) The ruling-class (individually and/or collectively) exchanges some portion of the material means of life they own in return for some substantive portion of the ruled-class's life-activity executed (individually and/or collectively) in conformity with the former's dictation.

Now what I want to say in criticism of these principles of domination, and say very briefly, is that they fail in their present form qua principles to cover many sorts of social relationships of domination. The inadequacy I am suggesting here is of Marx's principles themselves, not merely of his application of them. And how they fail as principles is this. Even if one agrees with the brilliant insight that domination is essentially a matter of an exchange of some

means of life (owned by the dominator) for some mode of obedient life-activity (yielded by the dominated), one need not agree -- indeed should not agree -- that within human societies this exchange of domination always involves:

- a) straightforwardly material means of life;
- b) the dominator's extended ownership of the dominated's means of life;
- c) means of life as the content of the dominator's ownership; and
- d) social classes of dominators and dominated.

Let us consider (a), (b), (c) and (d) in sequence. First of all, so far as (a) is concerned, it is indisputably the case that a relationship of domination may obtain by virtue of one party's (say, a charismatic leader's or an established clique's) monopoly ownership of some means of life (say, group approval or esteem) that is not a straightforwardly material means of life. Yet Marx, operating with a perhaps simplistic materialist ontology, seems to have more or less confined his notion of human means of life to merely food, clothing, shelter, productive tools and so on -- confined his notion, that is, to the realm of things. Now there are tricky ontological issues involved here that are compounded by Marx's treatment of various skills and forms of activity -- which are not things -- as subsumed by his materialist concept of means of life. So it is difficult to make the criticism here hard-and-fast. But be this as it may, Marx certainly does not include within his concept of means of life anything like group approval or esteem or love or what our language only permits

us to call psychological means of life; and he certainly does generally insist on the clear materiality of those means of life about which he talks. (Even the need "to raise a project in the imagination and execute it in reality" has as its ultimate object a straightforwardly material thing. And skills and forms of activity -- though not themselves material things -- must for him respectively issue in, or be defined in terms of, such to count for him as authentic means of life). So despite the complexities of issue here, it seems fair to say that Marx held means of life as means of life if and only if they were in some (usually straightforward) sense material means of life, and that he thereby precluded in fact, and likely in principle, all so-called psychological means of life (e.g. group approval, esteem, love, etc.) from basic consideration.

Now how all this ties in with domination may be briefly stated as follows. A structure of domination might involve one party's monopoly ownership of merely psychological means of life, with no clearly material means of life involved at all: as, say, in the case of a gang elite's monopoly ownership of group approval, measures of which approval are granted to ordinary members only insofar as the latter yield in return their life-activity in conformity with the elite's dictations. The domain of monopoly ownership here, though by no means necessarily extending to food, shelter, clothing and other straightforwardly material means of life (e.g. with an adolescent gang or a tribe or a religious or political movement) still provides a base for domination, still permits an exchange whereby one party may coerce another's obedience by virtue of its unreciprocated power to exclude the latter from the, so to say, "food of



the spirit". In ignoring this sort of structure of domination -- involving ownership of psychological as distinct from material means of life or, less controversially put, involving ownership of means of life of another type than any he ever mentions -- Marx's schema is unable to account adequately even for such crucial and frequent sociohistorical phenomena as men's volunteering for war, paying tithes or otherwise performing according to command with insufficient or no straightforwardly material inducements involved. Such prominent occurrences -- not to say much of man's everyday life -- must simply remain cipheric modes of domination, or be forced to fit a procrustean explanatory frame, so long as we remain within Marx's too-narrow notion of means of life. Indeed, inasmuch as inducements such as social approval or deprivation of it are known often to sway men more than food or shelter etc. (consider men's material sacrifices for glory or mere social acceptance), Marx's conceptual restriction here becomes not merely inadequate in extension but may miss the ultimate interest itself determining men's sociohistorical behaviour.

It is of interest to note here that it seems to be one of the few contributions of contemporary behaviorist psychology to have demonstrated that human conduct may be successfully controlled by the granting or withholding of approval pay-offs alone. That is, a monopolizer of approval (a "controller") meting out approval benefits ("positive re-enforcements") according to a strict system of exchange ("a schedule of re-enforcement") may exact precisely obedient life-activity ("behavioral objectives") from other individuals or groups

of individuals ("subjects") with no material inducements involved. One might indeed wonder here whether so-called "brainwashing" techniques in contemporary "people's republics" do not involve this very mechanism of domination on a grandiose scale: with such domination crucially if conveniently immune to detection by a Marxian standpoint and its restricted concept of "means of life".

If, on the other hand, so-called psychological as well as material means of life are, unlike Marx, allowed by us as means of life, then the kinds of phenomena alluded to above seem explicable in terms of ruling-class monopoly ownership: as in the case of the gang elite or the behaviourist controllers, the structure of domination involving in these cases the monopolizers of approval or some such psychological means of life meting out measures of this "food of the spirit" in exchange for life-activity in conformity with their dictation.

Now none of this should be misconstrued as denying that maintenance of ownership over the so-called psychological means of life might itself often require material devices (e.g. hidden or overt strong-arm tactics) to advance or protect it. But these material devices are not means of life, and so are not relevant to the point at issue (though they shall be later). Here it is the content of ownership, not its mode of security, with which we are concerned. And it seems clear that one party may dominate another by virtue of control over psychological means of life and that therefore Marx's restriction of means of life to more or less merely material content

renders his principles of domination importantly inadequate.

What however obscures this inadequacy in Marx's theory is the latter's confinement of purview to the work-and-marketplace structure of domination, where the ruling-class's monopoly ownership of the direct producers' material means of life is more or less conflated with its monopoly ownership of the society's material organs of ideological production (e.g. the mass media) so that the so-called psychological means of life (e.g. group approval) seem merely a matter of material-content ownership too. But even here, the point is missed that ruling-class domination is not just a matter of the monopoly owners exchanging such and such material means of life with the direct producers for such and such forms of the latter's obedient life-activity in return, but also a matter (usually correlate) of their exchanging certain psychological means of life with the direct producers for the latter's obedient life-activity in return. That is, the compound nature of the domination involved here, the psychological as well as the material content of coercive exchange between ruler and ruled, is missed. Thus, for example, that the white-collar worker yields his life-activity in conformity to ruling-class dictation not only to receive required material sustenance in return (e.g. food and shelter) but also to receive psychological sustenance (e.g. social status) is simplified by Marx to merely the former level of exchange, with all matters of this psychological sort having significance in his schema only derivatively on the super structural plane. In consequence, such phenomena as various workers' persistent collaboration with the ruling-class beyond



as it were the call of material interest becomes an issue of only ideological dimension: rather than -- as it should be -- a matter as well of men's very (psychological) means of life and at, therefore, the very "base" of sociohistorical consideration.

It would seem evident then that Marx's concept of "means of life" must be fundamentally broadened to subsume adequately the basic interests by which men are governed.

Such a revision would of course have far-reaching implications for his theory. To begin with, the work-and-marketplace structure of domination would stand under such a revision as a far more thorough-going system of coercive exchange -- involving material and psychological means of life -- than even Marx held. The ruling-class's hegemony over the working class comes out with any such broadening of the concept of means of life, as more totalitarian still than the most indignant Marxian apprehension presently has it. It is compounded. And, of course, insofar as comprehension of the mechanism of domination here is thus enriched, so correspondingly is comprehension of the requirements of liberation. Any theory of revolution, for example, must take into account disposition over these psychological means of life as well as over the straightforwardly material means of life if it is to be adequate in its liberative considerations. For if it does not so take account, it thereby gives unlimited allowance to "psychological" tyranny by approval/disapproval mechanisms: precisely, it seems, that permission of Marxian theory of which certain Marxian leaderships appear most fond in their "liberating" social rule.

The revision in question is also at least as significant with respect to those structures of domination that Marx omits from consideration -- namely, the adult/youth and man/woman ruling-class orders. For here, the power of domination of the respective rulers seems more thoroughly bound up with control over so-called psychological means of life than is the case with work-and-marketplace rulers. Indeed one might even say that it is on the so to say psychological level that the really substantive grip of, say, parents over their children lies -- both because the needs of the subject class in question are so great in this respect (a child may notoriously sicken or die from deprivation of parental love and approval) and because the monopoly ownership by the rulers of such means of life is so thoroughgoing (a child has virtually no alternative source of such love and approval than parents or in loco parentis figures). A similar, if not so strong, case might be made for the importance of control over psychological means of life in the man/woman structure of domination (e.g. the exchange of male admiration for "feminine" behaviour determining women's life-activity down to the latter's very posture and mode of movement). In any case, the broadening of the concept of means of life that I have been recommending -- to include the so-called psychological as well as the straightforwardly material -- seems imperative if domination is to be understood in anything like its full substance. Without such conceptual revision, we miss as it were half the story.

Finally, it is well to reiterate our earlier claim that some

sorts of domination must be missed altogether by confining as Marx does the notion of means of life to material stuffs alone. Not only is much of the order of domination he does attend to missed, and even more of the orders of domination he overlooks, by such conceptual narrowing, but certain sorts of domination (i.e. those involving the granting and withholding of social approval alone) are in principle ruled out holus-bolus. Consider, for example, the entire realm of "leisure" social intercourse with its abundance of domination frameworks operating solely in terms of minority-controlled group approbation and censure. Such socially permeative orders of rule just cannot be discerned at all by Marx's principles of domination so far as these hold merely to food, clothing, housing et al as the only means of life. In short, new as well as complementary forms of domination emerge into view via the conceptual revision in question: with of course precisely corresponding enrichment in the general project of human liberation.

Let us now move to consideration of (b) -- which holds that the exchange of domination must always involve extended ownership of the dominator over the dominated's means of life. This "extended ownership" is to be understood in both of two senses:

i that the dominator's ownership of the dominated's means of life extends beyond merely one means of life to many or all of the means of life (e.g. the capitalist typically has the power to exclude the worker from many if not all the means of life of the latter: similarly, the feudal lord the serf, and more so, the slave holder the slave).



ii that the dominator's ownership of the dominated's means of life extends through time beyond definite term to temporally unlimited ownership (e.g. the capitalist's power to exclude the worker from various means of life is not restricted in temporal duration, but may persist indefinitely with no time-limit to its hold).

Now Marx never explicitly states that domination to be domination must involve these two sorts of "extended" ownership. But since in his mature work he virtually never identifies as a relationship of domination anything that is not so characterizable,<sup>3</sup> we may take this condition of extended ownership (in both senses) as at least his implicit stipulation. Certainly his treatment of domination is limited to what in his account does meet such a two-sensed stipulation, and certainly we are presented thereby with an analysis of domination that altogether misses a great range of cases of domination which do not meet it.

What then is this "great range of cases" his implied principle of extended ownership fails to subsume? Well, first of all, there are many and various instances of domination which involve the dominator's underivative ownership of merely one means of life of the dominated: by which patently non-extended (in sense i) ownership obedient life-activity may still be effectively extracted by

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<sup>3</sup>So far as state and religious officers are involved in domination, they are for Marx just acting on behalf of "extended" owners collective interests, on the superstructural sphere: not thus themselves constitutive with those below them of a relationship of domination. (See Chapter IV)

the latter from the former. For example, ownership of just the village water-well and nothing else has quite enabled both bandits (e.g. Sicilian) and legal authorities (e.g. Iranian) to dictate to non-owning users a number of substantial forms of life-activity, though these non-owners may in other respects be entirely self-sufficient so far as their means of life are concerned. One party's unreciprocated power to exclude another party from simply a single means of life can provide here and elsewhere sufficient base for an exchange of domination: ownership of many or most means of life -- the economic base of domination to which Marx alone attends -- is just at the extreme end of a spectrum of forms of monopoly ownership whereby domination is enabled to obtain. Marx thus, again, misses much by his too narrow conceptualization of domination requisite. Lest it be thought that the sort of example I proffer above is of merely flukish social significance, I urge consideration of such mainstream phenomena as sexual domination or bureaucratic domination or professional domination where the dominator may here too have the unreciprocated power to exclude the dominated from just one means of life -- say, love-object or automobile license or medicinal treatment -- and be enabled thereby to extract an extraordinary yield of obedient life-activity from the non-owner in return (which performance we sometimes call in neat comparison with trained beasts, "jumping through<sup>h</sup> hoops"). Indeed it seems not altogether implausible that domination by this merely singular ownership of means of life -- which would seem to proliferate with

increasing social interdependency into an ever more elaborate series or gauntlet of separate servile exchanges -- is as ultimately oppressive for the modern everyman as his wage-slavery. Certainly it deserves some attention in any adequate analysis of domination and, correspondingly, in any adequate vision of human liberation. Marx's implicit requirement though of domination -- that it involve the dominator's ownership of many or all the dominated's means of life -- insulates all such less extended but perhaps progressively ubiquitous modes of domination from recognition. In a word, it liquidates the subtle where the subtle seems to hold ever more historical claim to acknowledgement.

The second sort of "extended ownership" implied by Marx to be necessary to a structure of domination is more radically inadequate in its subsumption still. Marx in fact never counts as effective ownership what is held merely for a limited term (e.g. by state officers). The owners of material resources to whom he refers are without exception those who have no such definite restriction of duration to their proprietorship. Indeed it is because their ownership is not so limited in term that they are consistently able -- unlike, say, the state officer -- to sell off and/or to transfer by inheritance the goods they own. Their ownership is subject to no set temporal bound (so long as the obtaining epochal economic form remains intact) and remains so even if the goods they own are by technological change or market ruin rendered valueless (the relation of ownership has not here altered, only its content). This difference



in ownership duration is for Marx recognized and protected by the legal and political superstructure and qualifies the ownership in question as truly private property. And it is the economic cognate of this private property -- what we have called private ownership -- with which he is exclusively concerned in his ruling-class analysis. Thus a state official's power to exclude his underling's from material means of life (e.g. by firing, demotion, etc.) -- because this ownership power is restricted by his term of office i.e. is non-private -- does not in itself constitute for Marx the economic base of a ruling-class arrangement. His position on these matters, is of course that the state is just an instrument of collective protection for the private owners of society and its officials thus mere executors of the latter's rule and not themselves rulers.

The problem with Marx's position here though is that it seems refuted ironically, by modern "Marxist" societies themselves where there is little or no private ownership of the means of production, yet state officials exert just as great if not greater dominion over their underlings as in any other social order. Since their dominion is not merely executive of private owners' collective rule -- it cannot be: there are few or no private owners of productive forces -- what is then its economic base?

The only satisfactory answer to this question must lie I think in broadening Marx's concept of ownership to include non-extended (in sense ii) as well as extended forms: that is, more specifically, not construing the ownership which the dominator has

over the dominated's means of life in terms merely of extended or unlimited-by-term or private ownership, but also in terms of ownership for a period of office alone (i.e. non-private ownership). By so broadening Marx's concept of ownership here, the peculiar ruling-class order of so-called "Marxist" societies themselves is rendered theoretically tractable and not, as hitherto, more or less ciphers to economic-base explanation. State officials are discernible as simply a different sort of monopoly owner of the means of life of those they dominate (i.e. owners for the term of their office), but monopoly owners nevertheless. Their ownership is just limited to their period of tenure and not unlimited by any such time-limit as Marx's owners are. Similarly, their exchange with their underlings of means of life for the latter's obedient life-activity in conformity with their dictation is also limited to such term in office, but again it is an exchange of domination nevertheless. Once Marx's notion of ruling-class ownership is revised to include what I have called "non-extended" ownership as well as "extended" ownership -- or, otherwise put, once his notion of ruling-class ownership is released from its implicit stipulation of unlimited duration -- the ruling-class mechanism of those "Marxist" societies he never saw are neatly comprehended by his own principles of domination. But without such revision, such mechanisms remain more or less immune to discernment, and continue masked in the misleading guise of socialist status.

None of the above is meant to impugn the importance of the

sociohistorical change from extended ownership (with all the economic powers of sale, inheritance etc. it permits) to non-extended or term ownership (with its abrogation of such powers). But that ruling-class ownership and the exchange of domination it enables may still obtain within the confines of period of office is still of signal significance. Almost half the peoples of the globe presently labour under such a ruling-class order with an ideological litany -- dedicated to the maxim that no ruling-class private ownership of social means of life = no (non-proletarian) ruling-class ownership of social means of life at all -- seeking to conjure away the domination beneath more casuistically perhaps than ever before. And this is important to expose: in some other manner than the mere counter-deceptions of anti-communism with which we are ordinarily regaled. I think the reason why Marx's theory itself fails to provide the needed breadth of concept of ownership to enable discernment of such ruling-class arrangements is because he never develops a clear concept of ownership to begin with; but merely employs historically ostensive definition. However, with the notion of ownership formulated in this essay (briefly,  $x$  owns  $y$  =  $x$  has power to exclude others from  $y$ ), the requirement of temporal extension assumed by Marx -- and indeed by all former characterizations of property that I am aware of -- loses its conventional force and the ruling-class order so-called of Marxist societies emerges clearly into view.

I do not think though that the importance of acknowledging what I will henceforth call term ownership (as opposed to private



ownership) ends with its applicability to post-Marx "socialist" societies. I suspect that it is as appropriately employable as a concept to the administrative structure of almost any public sector formation -- whether in a "socialist", capitalist or any other society. Marx's analysis of the state, as we have seen, construes it and/or its officials as wholly the executors of the collective interest of the ruling-class of private owners -- permitting thereby no distinct ruling-class ownership interests to the former as such. Now though one might agree with his sustained claim that the state and/or its officials do indeed conform in behaviour with the collective interest of the ruling-class of private owners in protecting the latter's dominion over the working class, I do not think that from this granted fact one may at all properly deduce that the former have no distinct ruling-class (term) ownership interests of their own. It is perfectly consistent with this granted fact that state officials do have such distinct (i.e. term) ownership interests; that these interests are not compromised but promoted by siding with the ruling-class of private owners against workers (e.g. not only for what is returned in the way of election expenses, propoganda support and so on, but for what is gained in maintaining their own ruling-class relations intact by preventing change in such relations in the complementary private sector); and that ruling-class term owners and ruling-class private owners together form one larger ruling-class who together defend their great collective ruling-class interest in the private and public work-and-marketplace as a monolithic

social partnership. Not only do I think that all this is perfectly "consistent" with Marx's claim that the state and/or its officials conform in behaviour with the collective interest of the ruling-class of private owners vis à vis the workers, but I think that only in this way can what is anomalous to Marx's one-sided theory of the state be plausibly explained. For example, if the state is merely "the executive committee" of the ruling-class of private owners, how is it that we can meaningfully talk about "splits" or "dealing" between government and business sectors as we persistently and properly do? How can there be "splits" or "dealing" between public and private sector rulers if the former have no comparable ownership interests with which to "split" or "deal", but are merely superstructural agents? One may perhaps explain with Marx -- if with difficulty -- the phenomena of "splits" here (by claiming them as essentially rifts of private owners' interests with private owners' collective interests -- being "reflected" on the superstructural plane), but the "dealing" -- the infamously permeative mutual pay-offs -- between public sector and private sector ruling-class members cannot be so explained without absurdity. For so soon as such exchanges are even admitted, the ownership holdings (albeit term holdings) of the former are admitted too and the claimed role of state rulers as only executors of the latter's interests is rendered self-contradictory.

If on the other hand, one allows that the state has distinct ownership interests of its own (and its officials corresponding "term" ownership interests) -- ownership interests whose content by the way

is not merely material means of life but "psychological" means of life (e.g. formalized social approval of titles and so on) and, as yet undiscussed, means of anti-life (e.g. weapons) as well -- then these and other anomalies are easily explained without derogating a whit from Marx's claim that the state is a protective mechanism of ruling-class private owners against workers. Again here, the alteration here is one of extension or, dialectically put, Aufhebung -- preservation of his insight in the process of surpassing it. Yet it is a crucial such alteration because it avoids Marx's crude fallacy of inferring in effect from the premise:

The State is the protector of the collective interests of the ruling-class of private owners against workers.

to the conclusion that:

The State is nothing but the protector of collective interests of the ruling-class of private owners against workers

while at the same time (leaving the above premise intact) it yields the explanation of what remains anomalous to Marx's improperly deduced position. Though from all this the implications are considerable with respect to the nature and extent of the work-and-marketplace ruling-class (i.e. it enlarges to include formerly mere superstructural roles and agents, not to say through such enlargement admitting the possibility of new ruling-class divisions), I will forego their exploration here. What alone I am concerned to point out now is that the concept of "term" ownership not only enables discernment of a ruling-class order in post-Marxian "socialist" societies, but just as importantly allows us to see the ruling-class set-up within the



state or 'public sector' of non-"socialist" societies. Here again the ruling-class in question -- what we might broadly label the public administrators -- has monopoly ("term") ownership of the material means of life (leaving aside now psychological means of life and means of anti-life) while the ruled class -- what we might broadly label underlings -- has little or no such ("term") ownership. And here again the former exchange those material means of life for the latter's obedient life-activity in return. The same principles of domination apply as with Marx's work-and-marketplace structure of domination proper, only here it is "term" rather than "private" ownership which provides the economic base of dominion. Yet another distinct ruling-class order (public administrator/underling) thus looms into sight which Marx seems to have missed or, at least, to have assumed as merely derivative from the one structure of domination to which he attends. In this case, however -- as with all cases addressed in this section -- the failure is with his principles of domination as such (here their too narrow notion of ownership) rather than with their adequacy of application.

It is worth emphasizing just how crucial this sophistication of the concept of ownership to include "term" ownership is so far as radically broadening the extensional hold of our two principles of domination. As I have said, it not only permits their proper application to the hitherto cipheric and contemporaneously important ruling-class orders of "socialist" societies, but to the state or public sector of non-socialist societies as well. Now so far as the

former range of application goes, one might with confidence assert that the view of a non-proletarian ruling-class order obtaining here is already pretty widely held by social and political thinkers, albeit without the theoretical foundations I have outlined above. However so far as the latter goes -- the public administrator/underling structure of domination in non-socialist societies -- the recognition of such seems <sup>largely</sup> ~~almost altogether~~ absent from the critical literature of social and political theorists. No Marxist or neo-Marxist so far as I know has even bothered to consider the issue, sanguine with Marx in the simplistic and often convenient belief that the capitalists have the monopoly of domination as well as everything else. And non-Marxists seldom consider the state in anything but its abstract relationship with citizens in general. Yet it seems fair to say that this structure of domination is, considering the human condition as a whole, much the most prevalent workplace structure of domination there is: growing apace with the growth of the public sector in non-socialist societies and already totalitarianly pre-eminent in "socialist" societies. Indeed I think it may properly be suspected that this public administrator/underling structure of domination is the coming universal ruling-class order of the world's work-and-marketplace, inexorably replacing capitalist hegemony as the latter replaced that of the lord and the guild-master. That even our radical social and political thought has remained more or less blind to it -- or, more specifically, to the "term" ownership which provides its base -- is more than faintly reminiscent of 18th century bourgeois theory's

blindness to the structure of domination being raised by the "free" ownership system it promoted to replace the fixed holdings of feudalism. In both cases, liberation from the old form of monopoly ownership (feudal then, capitalist now) seems viewed as liberation from such monopoly ownership altogether. In both cases, the new monopoly owners bourgeois (private owners then state "term" owners now) represent themselves as the liberators of humanity at the same time as they consolidate their own dominion. And in both cases, dogmatic insouciance of the new form of monopoly ownership is coercively elevated to the status of social creed, with all claim to the contrary regarded as the tool of reaction and the old ruling-class. That despite all this the new structures of domination in question may both be liberative compared to the old, I do not wish to deny.<sup>4</sup> But that they usher in some preultimate "realm of freedom" for all in the work-and-marketplace seems as gross a deception with the new ruling-class 'term' owners of a communist party as it formerly was with the new ruling-class "private" owners of a republican party. The claim in both cases seems merely to protect a new order of social rulers under an old ideological halo. The difference that matters here is that the form of ownership of the more recent of these

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<sup>4</sup>By "liberative" here, I do not refer to the technological advancement which these revolutionizing orders each yielded in their turn, but to the greater limitation each placed on ownership tenure by the ruling-class: the "bourgeois" revolution reduced such ownership tenure from its permanent ties to ruling-class lineage to the fluid ties of capital holding, and the "bolshevik" revolution reduced this in turn even further to ties of term-in-office alone.



ruling-classes is not yet clearly discerned -- a problem I have tried to remedy with the concept of a non-extended ownership. Once this concept is admitted, it seems to me that the hitherto undisclosed theoretical underpinnings for comprehending the progressively universalizing dominion of a public administrator ruling-class is made present to us. And such a notion Marx's presumption of only an extended ownership does not of course, permit. Indeed in this inadequacy of his ownership concept -- which fails as it does to subsume a pivotal order of domination at the very center of his theoretical focus, the work-and-marketplace itself -- in this inadequacy has perhaps Marx's most frontal theoretical failure. For so far as what he himself regards as the "essence" and "base" of sociohistorical affairs is thus largely unapprehended, he is rendered purblind in his own terms. As the anarchist Bakunin only instinctively recognized, it is on this matter of State rule that Marx is most fundamentally blind.

I would like to add in closing that it seems clearly to be within the effective jurisdiction of the "term" owners of the public sector or state that the most extreme of all forms of domination obtain -- more extreme certainly than the oppression of workers by capitalists which Marx so indignantly exposes. I do not refer here to the mainstream exchanges of domination between public administrators and worker underlings -- though even these may well be more thoroughly dictatorial than the exchanges of domination in the private work-and-

marketplace with which Marx deals<sup>5</sup> -- but to the more or less hidden exchanges of domination between such administrative rulers and inmate underlings (e.g. inmates of prisons, asylums and compulsory armies). Now it would be silly to overlook the private-owner (or indeed adult) ruling-class's contributory role in fostering such forms of more or less totalized domination. But on the other hand, the effective ownership monopoly of means of life in these contexts (albeit "term" ownership) is held -- as opposed to engendered -- by public administrators more or less independently of other ruling-class owners. The former seem thus, by Marx's economic principle of identifying ruling-class relations itself, an authentic ruling-class group in the situations in question. And I do not think it requires empirical demonstration here to claim properly that these forms of domination -- especially within those literal human-cages called prisons which involve utterly totalized ownership of the dominated's means of life without even the latter's ownership of a single article of clothing, dwelling-place and so on -- are forms of domination beside which the private-owner's rulership pales in comparison. Of course, Marx so far as he pays heed to these most thoroughgoing of all orders of domination (and he does more than almost anyone else I can think of

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<sup>5</sup>This is possible inasmuch as State work-jurisdictions are generally monopolist, whereas capitalist work-jurisdictions are generally not. This difference might belie the claim that even comparative liberation is secured for the worker under state-socialist as opposed to capitalist rule. But we enter now into an area of debate which it is not my purpose here to resolve.

in the philosophical tradition -- he is at least atypically sensitive enough not to ignore their import in the human condition altogether), Marx regards them as wholly derivative from the ruling-class interests of private work-and-marketplace owners. But as the foregoing pages have pointed out, it is precisely his failure to discern the "term" ownership interests of public sector or state rulers which permits him to draw such a reductionist conclusion. By so doing, he seems ultimately to insulate such orders of domination from any distinct critical consideration, and to sponsor thereby unwitting theoretical provisions for their continuance and re-enforcement (as "Marxist" societies have amply demonstrated with their abundance of state prisons and asylums for those who challenge not private but "term" ruling-class ownership). So not only does Marx's too narrow concept of ownership miss the increasingly universal public administrator-worker structure of domination and thus fail at the focus of his own consideration (work-and-marketplace), but it misses as well adequate comprehension of the correspondingly expanding public administrator -- inmate structure of domination which seems the most ruthlessly totalitarian ruling-class order of all. Those conservatives who see in his system "the road to serfdom", or "the new tyranny" or whatever have I think, like Bakunin, intuitively apprehended just this "double" failure in referential power of his principles of domination. The latter simply cannot apprehend -- without the conceptual broadening I have suggested -- the terrible power with which public-sector rule



is enabled in its own right.<sup>6</sup>

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We come now to consideration of (c) -- Marx's important supposition that the content of ruling-class ownership involves only means of life, or forces of production, means of anti-life or forces of destruction are thus conceptually ruled out by him from ever counting as economic content.<sup>7</sup> This certainly does not mean that such

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<sup>6</sup>Throughout this section, I have not made the following two necessary qualifications to my claim of a public administrator/underling structure:

1) Such a structure of domination ceases to obtain to the extent that "public administrators" are democratically responsible to and recallable by "underlings" (principles of government which Marx accorded enthusiastic report in Civil War in France (p. 41), but shied away from ever sponsoring himself. To the extent that this occurs, obedient life-activity is resolved into co-operative activity and domination into freedom (in the sense first sponsored by Rousseau).

2) Such a structure of domination operates -- as all structures of domination identified thus far, but more clearly -- within the socially embracing framework of what I call formal domination: which latter shall be elucidated in my consideration of (d).

<sup>7</sup>Marx uses the phrase "forces of destruction" in The German Ideology (e.g. p. 76), but in a quite different sense than I intend here:

These productive forces received under the system of private property a onesided development only, and became for the majority destructive forces.

Of course, I do not think Marx really intended by his concepts of "means of life" "forces of production" to rule out, say, owners of munitions industries as capitalists, and my point here does not require any such imputation. Ownership of "means of anti-life" or "forces of destruction" here, as I mean it, supposes their employability as such by the owner in question. Thus the ownership content of the munitions capitalist is not the sort of ownership content I am claiming Marx misses here.

"means of anti-life" or "forces of destruction" are ignored by him, or are not of crucial sociohistorical significance in his view. On the contrary, he treats these things as of signal importance in securing or protecting relations of production and the economic order as a whole: for example, as an integral part of the state mechanism of coercion which helps to maintain ruling-class private ownership intact. But such "means of anti-life" or "force of destruction" are clearly not themselves economic content for him: they are merely a central instrument whereby such ownership content is gained and/or held. Otherwise put, they are part of the power to exclude people from economic content but are not themselves constitutive of it.

However, to advance straightway to rejoinder, it seems quite clear that means of anti-life or forces of destruction can themselves be ownership content and not merely instruments of the latter's protection; and that, as well, their monopoly ownership can of itself provide an economic base for exchanges of domination, and not merely help to secure or maintain this base as extrinsic guard. Means of anti-life or forces of destruction do not as Marx seems to have it merely play the role in human affairs of indispensable fence to the quintessential ownership content of means of life or forces of production, but are themselves ownership content of no less import which, when monopolized, can ground exchanges of domination every bit as effectively as ownership of the staffs of life-support. To demonstrate this claim more formally, let me immediately proffer two

principles of domination that "match" those implicit in Marx's theory: only with the economic or ownership content here as "means of anti-life" or "forces of destruction", and the exchange of domination as a matter of withholding rather than of granting such economic content in return for obedient life-activity:

1) One group of people (the ruling-class) have monopoly ownership of the means of anti-life (or of the forces of destruction) of a society while another group (the ruled-class) have little or no ownership of these means of anti-life (or forces of destruction).

2) The ruling-class (individually and/or collectively) withholds to some extent the exercise of these means of anti-life or forces of destruction upon the ruled-class (individually and/or collectively) in return for the latter's life-activity in conformity with their dictations.

Let me now give a simple illustration of the operation of these two principles of domination. A group of men (let us call them "the Whites") have a monopoly ownership of "means of anti-life" or "forces of destruction" (i.e. guns and ammunition) while another group of men (let us call them "the Non-Whites") have little or no such ownership. Neither group on the other hand owns any monopoly of the means of life or forces of production which the other requires to stay alive. The first group (the Whites) then by virtue solely of its monopoly ownership of the forces of destruction implicitly or explicitly exchanges the withholding of the exercise of these forces upon the non-owners (the Non-Whites) for the latter's obedient life-



activity -- and there are no limits to what this may include -- in accordance with the former's dictations. In any case where the Non-Whites refuse or neglect to so conform to the white's various dictations, the white's cease to suspend the exercise of their forces of destruction upon the Non-Whites and the latter are wounded, mutilated or killed. In this manner, the Non-Whites enter into the exchange of domination with the Whites to stay alive. Just as the ruled-class in Marx's structure of domination must exchange their obedient life-activity in return for the means of life in order to stay alive, so the ruled-class here must exchange their obedient life-activity in return for the withholding of means of anti-life to stay alive. The exchange of domination operates just as effectively with the economic base of monopoly ownership of means of anti-life as with the economic base of monopoly ownership of means of life. In both cases, the non-owners in this respect either yield up obedient life-activity in conformity to the owners' dictations, or they suffer material suffering or demise.

Now this negative exchange of domination which is enabled by the monopoly ownership content of means of anti-life or forces of destruction seems contrary to Marx's assumption to operate in many social contexts without any monopoly ownership of means of life or forces of production necessarily involved. Of itself, it is sufficient economic base for ruling-class hegemony. Much of the realm of organized crime and much of historical international relations, for example, seem to involve simply this negative exchange of domination

-- one party extracting obedience from another party by virtue of unreciprocated ownership of destructive forces alone. Indeed one might even plausibly claim that this sort of ownership is a necessary condition for monopoly ownership of the means of life or forces or production to obtain, whereas the reverse is not the case. According to this argument, the former would not merely deserve the distinct status here accorded to it against Marx, but would deserve in addition, and even more frontally against his position, the status of primacy as well. Indeed reasoning this way, Marx's supposition that the content of the dominator's ownership is means of life or forces of production alone (with means of anti-life or forces of destruction simply part of the mechanism whereby this ownership is protected) might be shown not just to have missed a crucial type of economic content, but -- worse -- to have missed the very primary type of such economic content.

However, I do not wish here to pursue this line of argument, plausible and telling though it might prove to be. Rather I choose to insist merely upon means of anti-life or forces of destruction as one fundamental sort of ownership content that can of itself ground exchanges of domination, and that must accordingly be taken into distinct account in any adequate analysis of ruling-class structures. As a matter of fact, it seems to me that pretty well all the structures of domination to which I have so far attended in this essay ultimately involve monopoly ownership by the ruling-class of both means of life or forces of production and means of anti-life or forces of destruction. Indeed I suspect that it is precisely this conflation in fact which

disposes Marx towards that conflation in principle whereby he supposes monopoly ownership of the former alone to exhaust the realm of economic content altogether. However it is crucial here to emphasize that where monopoly ownership of both forces of production and destruction lies in the hands of a single ruling-class, this ruling-class must be accordingly conceived more broadly than Marx allows -- to include explicitly that sector whose ownership content is forces of destruction: otherwise we remain confined yet again to that one-sided view of the ruling-class that Marx persistently sponsors: which, in this context, is one-sided by virtue of its conceptual restriction of ownership content to forces of production alone. Once we do properly broadened here the referential range of ruling-class to include the monopoly owners of forces of destruction as well as forces of production, then we have -- most significantly -- people like military and police commanders qualifying for membership in the "uppermost" social ruling-class. Now the latter's ownership in this respect is generally (certain in modern times) term ownership -- as explained in (b) above -- and -- as also indicated in (b) above -- the latter are also generally in partnership with the ruling-class owners of forces of production. But neither of these qualifications negates their status as ruling-class members who have by virtue of their monopoly ownership sufficient economic base for exchanges of domination with non-owners.

Should it still be insisted here that these "term" owners of forces of destruction are merely -- as Marx would seem to want to



have it -- executors of the interests of ruling-class private owners of forces of production, then neither "dealing" or indeed outright struggles between these classes can be adequately explained. Much less can those various important modern cases where military and/or police commanders secure rule of a society against the interests of the private monopoly owners of forces of production (e.g. in "socialist" military/police takeovers). Indeed even those very numerous historical instances of military invasion or occupation of this or that country are difficult to explain in terms of private monopoly ownership interests alone: some significant status must be granted to the interests of owners of forces of destruction too to avoid procrustean theoretical subsumption. In short, monopoly ownership of the means of anti-life or forces of destruction needs to be taken into account in any sociohistorical context as well as monopoly ownership of the means of life or forces of production. The former is not, as Marx supposed merely an instrument of the latter's protection, but is itself economic base content whether its owners are in partnership "with productive-force owners" (normally it would seem) or in outright conflict with the latter, or -- as my opening example suggested -- ruling so to speak "on their own stick", their ownership content qualifies them for full ruling-class status. And it is in terms of the principles of domination proffered at the beginning of the present section that their rule or dominion functions: principles which Marx by his supposition of only means of life as the content of dominator ownership failed, with the further ruling-class membership

they pick out, to recognize altogether.

Well, it is obvious how Marx's failure in concept of ownership (missing "term" ownership: see (b)) and his failure here in concept of ownership content together constitute a dual failure in his principles of domination which render the latter specially unable to pick out the non-derivative role of State rulers in social domination. Again then, my criticisms and broadening of Marx's concepts in these respects provide the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings to the intuitive recognition of both anarchists and conservatives that Marx's theory is consistent with and even promotive of a "new tyranny" by public-sector potentates alone. However the enablement in understanding domination which these conceptual revisions provide is not restricted in its application to merely state domination. The adult/youth and male/female structures of domination with which we earlier engaged are also more adequately understood in light of these crucial revisions: more particularly, in light of the principles of the "negative" exchange of domination which my broadened concept of ownership content permits us to discern. That is, this more inclusive concept, in subsuming means of anti-life or forces of destruction as well as means of life or forces of production, enables our theoretical recognition of the enormously important role that simple brute force plays or can play in adult/youth and male/female ruling-class orders.

Suppose, for example, that man and wife effectively own all their means of life in common: and that the former therefore is no

longer able to dominate the latter by virtue of monopoly ownership of means of life. Though for Marx this arrangement would seem enough to dissolve the material base of domination here altogether, it is clear that by virtue still of the man's monopoly ownership of means of anti-life -- held for the most part in lieu of the injury-impossible might which he owns in his person and which his wife owns in her person little or none of -- he may exact obedient life-activity from her as effectively as if he had monopoly ownership of their means of sustenance. An exchange of domination may take place by virtue of his personal capacity for violence and his wife's want thereof, with no monopoly ownership of means of life involved. Either she implicitly or explicitly yields obedient life-activity in accordance with his dictations or, simply, he attacks her physically (i.e. in my earlier formulation, no longer withholds the exercise of means of anti-life upon her). Indeed it seems plausible to regard, as elsewhere, this monopoly ownership of means of anti-life or forces of destruction as primary ownership: that without which "positive" monopoly ownership cannot obtain, but (as here) can itself be held independently of the latter. Again, monopoly ownership of the former sort must be taken account of in understanding domination, being perhaps more basic still than the ownership of means of life. (I suspect it is: not only in the sense above, but in the sense of being the evolutionary/historical ground of all human ownership of means of life). But whether primary in these ways or not, my point is simply to show that ownership of means of anti-life cannot be



ignored as a ground of rule in the male/female structure of domination any more than elsewhere. Of course, again as elsewhere, the (male) ruling-class here generally has in the sociohistorical continuum monopoly ownership of both means of life and means of anti-life. But the full extent of this domination must be understood in terms of both and not only, as with Marx's concept of the content of ownership, in terms of the former alone. My revision in this respect thus turns out to be as important to adequate understanding of the material base of male domination as of the State's.

Needless to say, what has been argued above with respect to men's rule over women as informed by the "negative" sort as well as -- if not more primarily than -- the "positive" sort of exchange of domination, applies a fortiori to adults' rule over youth. With the father or mother's relationship with pre-adolescent offspring, for example, the former's monopoly of physical power in virtue of height, weight, motor dexterity et al is so overwhelming as to be not only socially unique in the power it affords but probably thereby the very elemental facticity of the latter's lives (thus perhaps children's near-universal terror of all-enabled giants, and the persistence of such fear into adult notions of the almighty). Indeed the monopoly of violence-capacity, of the forces of destruction by adults in their relationship with youth might more than anywhere else be held here as the basic ground of ruling-class dominion: for in no other structure of domination is the extraction of obedient life-activity from the ruled so consistently translatable into the immediately cashable

imperative of "Do x, or suffer physical attack". With this order of domination perhaps more than any other then, the exchange of withheld "means of anti-life" for compliant behaviour seems a basic principle of rule requiring theoretical recognition if human domination is to be anything like adequately understood.

In summary of (c) thus, we may say that Marx's concept of means of life as the only ownership content upon which domination is based, is fundamentally mistaken not only the rule exercised by men over men by virtue of the monopoly ownership content of "means of anti-life" (e.g. military rule), but even more so the rule of men over women and adults over youth by virtue of the same sort of economic base. Just as Engels correctly rebutted the "brute-force theory" of Duhring as missing the basic importance in history of the ownership of productive forces, so here we correctly rebut Marx for missing the basic importance in domination of the ownership of destructive forces. Both types of ownership content it is clear must be granted status as the stuff of the economic base upon which exchanges of domination are enabled to arise. And if one or the other is to be called "primary", it seems the latter is the more appropriate candidate: inasmuch as it is true as a matter of fact that unreciprocated ownership of destructive forces can of itself ground exchanges of domination, whereas similar ownership of productive forces by itself cannot in general even obtain. Or, more colloquially put, the carrot requires a stick to protect it to exact obedience, but the stick is able to command alone. (Lest the Marxian response to all this be that the "stick" requires a

"carrot" before its wielder can stay alive, and thus ownership of the means of life remains primary, I remind him that -- on the infrastructural level of power as opposed to the superstructural level of right -- a hungry stick-owner can usurp a stickless carrot-owner any day. Though, I hasten to add, historically the two sorts of ownership here are generally allied -- against non-owners -- rather than opposed).

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We come now, finally, to consideration of (d) -- of, that is, Marx's central supposition that all cases of domination in human society are cases of opposing classes of dominators and dominated. Now though I have spent most of this entire section in furtherance of precisely this claim -- more or less simply broadening its referential hold to include much more than the private work-and-market-place to which Marx pretty well exclusively attends -- I still want to hold that domination in human society is not always a matter of a ruling-class or classes on one hand and a ruled class or classes on the other. Rather I want to argue that domination is to a significant extent a matter of: (i) individuals oppressing other individuals with no class relations necessarily involved; and, to a much more significant and interesting extent, (ii) a matter of this or that social form dominating all members of a society alike with no internal classes identifiable as the rulers and the ruled with respect to the domination in question (this latter being I think something Marx himself brilliantly recognized in part, but neglected



to follow through to its paradigm-subverting conclusion).

Well, (i) really requires very little in the way of explanation given its abundant evidence to ordinary experience. I suspect there is almost no-one who has not been subject on occasion to the purely individual domination of this or that person who holds for that occasion and with no class affiliation a monopoly of some means of life or violence which he grants or withholds only in return for some form of obedient life-activity in conformity with his demands: the proprietor of some petty commodity (whether it be drink, transportation or whatever that is not at that time available from any other source), or the owner of some minor weaponry (whether it be artificial (e.g. gun) or organic (e.g. muscle), that is again, monopolistically held for that time) who in either case requires compliant behaviour -- say, unearned payment or obsequious deference -- for the granting or withholding of the particular instrument of which he then has possession. Now cases of this sort, cases of merely individual domination with no class involvement at all are just too well known to labour further here. But they deserve recognition, which of course Marx's purely class analysis of domination does not and cannot accord them. And inasmuch as they constitute by virtue of their peculiar arbitrariness perhaps the most immediately excruciating forms of domination in all social intercourse, this failure in principle of his theory of domination to take account of them is really rather significant. Again, Marx's theory here seems to suffer from that liquidation of particularity about which I have already

commented in other connections.

(Before leaving this point, I think it is worth acknowledging on Marx's behalf that the cases of non-class domination to which I refer are not obviously of historical import, in the usual sense of this term. Yet on the other hand, it seems that it is precisely this "usual sense" of the term to which Marx in other contexts is intransigently opposed: "history" which pre-empts from its reference the oppression of "real, living individuals" in its attendance solely to "great" men and events strutting the world's stage. If it is one of Marx's central concerns, and I think it is, to lift into ideological view the nitty-gritty of the everyday lives of the masses, then his failure in the respect identified above is not one that may be too easily dismissed as non-historical).

Let us now engage with the second and much more important claim I want to make against Marx's supposition that domination always involves classes of rulers and ruled. Here as I've already suggested, my concern is to argue, very briefly, that domination is to a most significant extent a matter of a form of social life dominating all members of society with no ruling-class/ruled-class division accountable for the domination. Consider the following exemplary case of such domination:

Members of a society live in accordance with a strict rule or rule-complex stipulating that no member may touch the erotogenic zones of, or disclose his or her own to, any other member except in hiding. This rule or rule-complex is classless inasmuch as no class

is specially responsible for its construction (it is passed down from time immemorial) nor for its enforcement (its violations are in some way penalizable by all other members of the society); and inasmuch as no class is specially free from its repressive governance (it prohibits or frustrates the erotic expression and contact of all alike).

This coercive regulation at the same time constitutes a structure of domination par excellence inasmuch as:

i) Not merely some but all individuals of the society are confronted as individuals by monopoly ownership of some means of life or anti-life (e.g. social approval or disapproval) held by the society as a whole. The monopoly ownership is the so far unidentified but crucial one of collective monopoly ownership vis à vis ownerlessness in this respect of each of the individuals composing the collective (a distinction which is logically grounded in the elementary difference between collectively and distributively construed sets, which difference permits of course properties to obtain with respect to the whole of a membership and yet not to its constituting members).

ii) Not merely some but all individuals of the society are required as individuals to exchange obedient life-activity in conformity with the social rule or rule-complex in question in return for the granting or withholding of the means of life or anti-life respectively by the society as a whole. That is, the non-owners (society's members qua individuals) must conform in their behaviour



to the dictates of the monopoly owner (society's membership qua collective) or suffer as grievously (though differently) as if they failed to comply with the demands of the work-and-marketplace ruling-class. Here too obtains the exchange of domination: only with the dominator and the dominated as collective and individuals composing the collective as opposed to ruling and ruled-classes of different memberships, and with the dictates to which the dominated are required to conform to secure well-being as imposed by all on each as opposed to some on others. But despite such distinctions, it is a structure of domination nevertheless.

Because too this sort of non-class domination -- what I shall henceforth call purely formal domination -- does not involve individual or co-operative project in the life-activity which is so dictated (i.e. the dictation here is a social given, not a conscious construction), it is clearly different from government by social plan: which Marx took to be the activity of liberation. Indeed insofar as here not even a ruling-class is free in the sense of materially realizing self-raised project, the form of domination in question is more thoroughgoing than any of the orders of domination to which this essay has so far attended. It involves all members of the society in the yielding up of obedient life-activity in accordance with non-self-raised dictate, involves all members of the society on the ruled side of the exchange of domination.

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Now this sort of non-class or "purely formal/domination"

which the above case of a rule or rule-complex of erotic prohibition compressedly demonstrates is not altogether unsensed by Marx. Throughout his mature work he persistently and strikingly describes the capitalist order as having so to speak "a life of its own", blindly operating as a network of economic roles and laws by which even the capitalist is bound and chained. The idea of a "formal domination", (if not purely formal) is thus raised to theoretical consciousness by him -- domination by a form of social life as distinguished from domination by merely this or that ruling-class. However, in seeing as he does the latter as the "representative" of the former, Marx does not as he properly should catch the obvious implication of this relationship he himself suggests: which is that the structure of "formal domination" here is primary and the structure of class domination secondary (qua "representative").<sup>8</sup> Instead, perhaps in his well-known zeal to lay blame on the privileged,

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<sup>8</sup>Consider this remark from Marx's Preface to Capital where the ruling-class capitalist is seen by Marx as a mere "creature" of the social order in which he lives:

To prevent possible misunderstanding, a word. I paint the capitalist and the landlord in no sense couleur de rose. But--my standpoint--can less than any other make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he socially remains [my emphasis], however much he may subjectively raise himself above them (CI, 10).

But then Marx proceeds to fill his great volume with thundering denunciations and ascriptions of blame squarely directed at this very "creature" capitalist, who cannot, by his own words, be made "responsible" for the social role he plays!

he always reverts to preoccupation with ruling-class domination as such. Because the capitalist, despite his own enslavement to the system of capital which he "represents", is at the same time enabled by this system to exploit others awfully, Marx so fixes his attack on him, the merely "representative" capitalist, that the formal domination by which he is enabled and into which he too must reductively fit is somehow lost to view. And so the "class enemy" looms so large in his eyes that it becomes somehow in the end the enemy of human liberation for him, despite his own apparent recognition of its derivative status. In this way, Marx seems to fall victim to something akin to self-contradiction -- by virtue of that same peculiar preoccupation with the domination of the work-and-market-place ruling-class upon which this essay has already often commented.

"Formal domination" has now, it is clear, taken on a significance in our considerations which my opening paradigm does not indicate. The latter (which by the way I think may be properly applied to almost all social formations in history, including present "socialist" societies) simply shows the plausibility of purely formal domination, but with our notice of Marx's own (ambivalent) postulation of formal domination underlying class domination we are faced with a non-pure but perhaps much more important sort of formal domination than we started with. Marx's failure to take account in any way of purely formal domination has now become a failure as well to take proper account of formal domination as it grounds class domination.



But before the great flaw in Marx's theory I am suggesting here may be fully appreciated, more clarification of the theoretical place of formal domination is indispensable: more precisely how, for example, it is to be seen as related to class domination. So far we have considered the nature of purely formal domination (i.e. with no class domination involved), but we have not considered how, as such, it relates to class domination; nor, more importantly, when class domination is involved in its operation (as, to use Marx's term, its "representative"), how exactly this relationship of "represented" to "representative" is to be construed. Somehow "formal domination" has rapidly taken on in our account the dimensions of not only a complementary but an underlying framework to class rule -- and thereby suddenly all embracing theoretical status -- but its conceptual shape in this regard is, to say the least, still somewhat amorphous. To strike straight and very abridgedly to the core of my contention here, I proffer the following description of "formal domination" which explicates its possible candidacy as the basic unifying framework of all human domination discussed to this point.

Formal domination is the domination of a form of social life, in accordance with which all the individuals of a society are constrained to act: in an exchange of domination (as described above) between members of the society qua individuals and members of the society qua collective. Such a coercive form of social life may be understood merely as a particular form (e.g. the rule or rule-complex of erotic prohibition discussed in my opening case), or as all such

particular forms, "pure" and "non-pure", taken together as an integrated system. The latter is the sense in which I am interested here.

Formal domination as a system -- well recognized in the ordinary language phraseology of "the system" -- is perhaps best likened to an all-covering social game-structure into which every individual of a society is plunged from his or her birth as the historically ensconced framework through which each is constrained to act as a current member of the society in question. Thus, as again our ordinary language has it in referring to this embracing system of social intercourse, failure "to play the game", whatever one's "position", entails liability to "penalty" according to "the rules". What permits this peculiar "game" to be a structure of domination as opposed to ordinary games is that entry into the form of its given dictates is not a matter of choice, nor of restricted duration. Everyone is constrained "to play the game" and to continue doing so as long as he or she is a member of the society concerned.

It is, of course, difficult if not impossible to identify the underlying principles in virtue of which ordinary language thus reduces the exquisite complexity of our forms of social intercourse to the conceptual unity of "the system" or "a game" binding all alike. But let me suggest anyway, in line with the principles of domination developed to this point, that the unifying principles of this so-called system or game are:

- 1) Every participant (i.e. member of the society in question) is

required to attempt to protect his/her powers to exclude others from society's available means of life and anti-life: or, otherwise put, to protect his/her effective ownership domains (the content of such exclusive domains ranging almost unlimitedly from food-stuffs to weapons, from personal effects or money to spouse's sexuality,<sup>9</sup> other people's abilities or sectors of the earth).

2) Every participant (i.e member of the society in question) is required to attempt (in historically varying respects) to increase these powers to exclude or ownership domains by continuous exchanges of some part or use of them with others.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>See my "Monogamy: A Critique", The Monist, Vol. 6, No. 54 (October 1972), pp. 587-600.

<sup>10</sup>I cannot undertake here to say all I would like to say about these two proposed unifying principles of the "social game": such requires considerably more than all I have written to this point. But a few brief asides here anyway.

First, I think the rule or rule complex of erotic prohibition identified earlier in my example of "purely formal" domination is an important exemplification of the operation of principle (1).

Secondly, I think such various popularized phenomena as those referred to in talk of "pecking order", "inflation", "creeping bureaucracy", "profit maximization", "imperialism", and so on are just so many exemplifications of the operation of principle (2). Lest it be objected that principle (2) is not really applicable to feudal and caste social orders with their fixity of social station and thus proprietary holding, I must insist that though people have in such societies a more or less fixed social station (say, guild worker) within these fixed stations there is generally an elaborated order of rank (apprentice, journeyman, master, etc.), not to say an outside chance to leap up or fall down a whole social station or more through some good or bad "fortune". As the literature of these societies abundantly indicates, attempting to "get ahead" in social position and/or cognate ownership holdings is as much a governing principle of playing these "social games" as any other: only the range of movement here is different, not the logic of action. (To reject the correspondence of social position and proprietary holding here is, of course, to reject the original objection). cont'd



Individuals of a society are said to be "required" to act or attempt to act in accordance with these underlying principles of the social "system" or "game" in which they find themselves because, if they do not as individuals so act or attempt to act, they are liable to some form or other of substantial "penalty" in that social "system" or "game". For example, anyone not attempting to protect or increase by exchange his/her own powers to exclude thereby renders him/herself liable to penalties ranging from social contempt ("fool", "weakling") to indigence or death; whereas anyone not attempting to act in accordance with other's ownership domains or sanctioned empowering exchanges thereby renders him/herself liable to more immediate and more formidable penalties still. Such failures to comply with the underlying principles of the "way of life" or social form in question are -- to pursue the model of "game" in the more vivid concrete -- as if a racer were to be overtly indifferent to holding/advancing his own position in a race or to his violation of another's holding/advancing position. Such non-adherence to game principles risk not only post facto penalties, but utter unintelligibility. The game

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Finally, that people may not be conscious of their conformity to these principles in their action is no more mysterious than people's unconsciousness of the grammatical principles according to which they speak. For direct example, the contemporary academic who acts in such a way as to protect and increase by exchange his academic holdings (e.g. writing journal articles in return for tenure, or rank/salary promotion, or other professional payoff to self) is governed by these principles whether he is aware of it or not. He would not be so governed only of course if he acted in other manner (e.g. was indifferent to plagiarism of his work or refused self-advancements: which is, it is certain, is as rare behaviour as voluntarily yielding position in a race, an analogy which I shall soon pursue.)

seems the very framework of meaning of action which has to be followed for action to even achieve social sense. Hence to return to the macrocosmic social "game", those who do not attempt to follow its given general dictates of ownership behaviour are very apt to be considered insane. That remarkable antagonist to this ownership logic, Jesus, was, we might recall, not only crucified but considered largely inhuman by those not regarding him mad.

If there is then a general hold of the social form or "game" constraining all alike within a given common framework in terms of which every individual must continuously act or attempt to act to "keep his chances alive", if there is then this "formal domination" of social order over all its current membership such that all must obey its given dictates to avoid the stricture of various penalty or indeed condemnation to one form or other of social meaninglessness, it is not difficult to see how ruling-class domination is related to it as -- to use Marx's notion -- its "embodiment" or "representative." (Marx of course only employed this notion to the capitalist "representing or "embodying" capital: but we shall construe the relationship here in much more general terms, with all ruling-class members -- male, adult, public-administrator et al as well as work-and-market-place -- included in our concept of ruling-class membership.) That is, just as with an ordinary game, we regard those who most effectively exemplify its logic as "embodiments" or "representatives" of the game, so with the social "game" we may regard those who most effectively exemplify its logic as its "embodiments" or "representatives": and

ruling-class members, who by definition have most successfully protected and increased by exchange their powers to exclude (else their rule or exchanges of domination with ruled-class members could not obtain) obviously so qualify. They best exemplify the social "game" by virtue of their demonstrably ascendant status in its ownership contest,<sup>11</sup> and in this sense they are properly regarded as its "embodiments" or "representatives". As ordinary language again has it, they are society's "winners" and those they dominate its "losers". Needless to say, the logic of the social "game" in which they are ascendant requires that they keep it intact: thus their vigorous protection of the social form, which follows from their exemplification of its requirements.

Ruling-class domination is, in sum, based on formal domination. The latter enables the former as a game-structure enables the game's winners. Behind the "representative" rule of the monopoly owners lies the sovereign rule of the social form itself, in terms of which ruling-class members are themselves constrained to act. It commands all; they, in virtue of their effective exemplification of its historically given dictates, command others: while at the same time protecting it in lieu of the same obeisance to its imperatives of ownership security and increase. It is, in the arresting phraseology

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<sup>11</sup>Contest here, of course, does not imply fair contest. On the contrary, unlike ordinary games, there is no "starting-even" stipulation here: an inequity which the contemporary ethical panacea of "equal opportunity" would seem to have the function to resolve.



of Marx himself, "the weight of all the dead generations that hangs like a nightmare on the brains of the living": the all-constraining heritage of a way of life that binds like a given grammar of social intercourse, in terms of which all are required to act to achieve even social intelligibility.

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Despite the obviously very skeletal nature of this description of "formal domination", I think that its postulation promises resolution to certain basic anomalies in Marxist sociohistorical explanation. One such anomaly concerns, as I have already pointed out, Marx's inconsistent positioning on domination by economic form and domination by ruling-class: on the one hand he holds the former to be primary (with ruling-class membership as merely its "creature" or "representative"), while on the other hand, he seems to hold the latter as primary (with all domination a matter of this or that ruling-class's hegemony as such).<sup>12</sup> But what I'm concerned to engage with here is not this internal anomaly of apparently inconsistent positioning in Marxian theory, but rather the latter's utter inability to explain the historical failures of its own social products to achieve liberation in the work-and-marketplace by virtue of capitalist usurpation alone. What I suggest the postulation of formal domination

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<sup>12</sup>It is worth emphasizing here that even when the economic form underlying ruling-class domination is kept in view by Marx, it is not at all the same as the "formal domination" I identify and is still unable to explain the "anomalies" to which I now address myself.

underlying class domination permits is resolution of precisely this problem: in a phrase, Marxist revolutions' failure to achieve liberation in the work-and-marketplace accountable for here by its guiding theory's failure to come to grips with the formal domination upon which ruling-class domination is based.

Thus, if it is granted that there is formal domination in a pre-Marxist society -- a form of social life constraining all its members to act or attempt to act in terms of its principles of ownership protection and increase -- by virtue of which formal domination ruling-class domination is enabled -- then clearly usurpation of merely the current ruling-class's position of domination does not ensure liberation. Formal domination is not necessarily touched by any such change. And a new ruling-class may arise just as easily as before, because the underlying form enabling it remains intact. Even if the type of ownership itself is importantly altered -- with so-called Marxist societies, from what I call "private" ownership to "term" ownership -- the general form of social life is still not thereby nihilated. And, again, the ruling-class domination it enables is with this new type of ownership no more ruled out than before. The sovereign dominator, the underlying structure or "game" of social intercourse is just altered in the tenure of its work-and-marketplace states: its general principles of government continue in force, and the ruling-class domination they enable is as likely as ever. In other words, there is no question here of a dark "human nature" or a "leadership betrayal" or "capitalist plot" -- the standard

gestures of explanation in this regard -- somehow undermining Marxist revolutions in the mysterious manner of deux ex machina, but rather a question of an ensconced form of social life remaining generally intact throughout specific changes in its ownership holding period and ruling-class embodiment. (I suspect that this point is what people intuitively apprehend with their talk of the "same old game" going on in Marxian societies.) The great failure of liberation here is no sinister anomaly, but quite explicable in terms of a formal domination that -- until it itself is broken -- persists through mere ruling-class overthrows, and even overthrows of "private" ownership. To undertake only the latter alterations, as Marx and the Marxists seem to have done, is to leave the ultimate enemy of work-and-marketplace (or indeed any other ruling-class) domination intact: as if to eliminate a game's established winners and their tenured positions was to eliminate the game itself. Only by postulation of, and liberative engagement with, the underlying structure of all ruling-class domination -- formal domination -- may the historical failures of Marxian societies to achieve their intended liberation be adequately explained, or transcended.

Another basic anomaly in Marxian theory (though not so far as I know ever recognized as such) which the postulation of formal domination helps to resolve is one I hinted at in the closing paragraphs of the last chapter. Here the suggestion was that Marx's utter conflation of the requirements of human nature and technological development left his theoretical framework unable even to discern, let



alone account for, possible contradictions between the two. Now I think it is undeniable that human-natural and technological requirement, as characterized by Marx, may conflict: inasmuch as the former's essential requirement is for him positive freedom (see Chapter 1), while the latter's inevitable effect is by implication of his own claim, expansion of the realm of physical necessity:

Production not only supplies a material for the need, but it also supplies a need for the material ... creating ... a felt need in the consumer (my emphasis: G, 92).

By thus expanding the realm of physical necessity in virtue of expanding needs, technological development stands opposed to the achievement of positive freedom, according to Marx's own words in Capital:

In fact, the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by physical necessity ... ceases (my emphasis: CIII, 820).

So it seems clear that Marx's own claims place technological development and material realization of human nature at odds with another.<sup>13</sup> The former creates needs, thus broadens the hold of "physical necessity", thus hinders actualization of "the realm of freedom" towards which human nature is intrinsically disposed.

Though it is thus derivable from his own work, Marx appears to have missed this fundamental opposition in principle between human

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<sup>13</sup>But there is ultimately no conflict between them, the Marxist might reply, "because technological development always satisfies more needs than it creates, hence contracts the 'realm of necessity' more than it expands it". Such a reply embodies of course just the sort of indiscriminate assumption at which my criticism is aimed here.

natural essence and technological development. And he seems to have managed this oversight by, in brief, attending only to the positive freedom which technological development promotes by virtue of its amelioration of natural necessity and by virtue of its material realization of the human essence within need-stipulated limits.

In other words, only those aspects of technological development which are consistent with or abet man's positive freedom seem ever to be appreciated by him. Technological development's negative role of expanding the realm of necessity through expanding needs -- which historically raised necessity just as clearly as natural necessity derogates from man's positive freedom -- seems simply to have eluded his consideration. In this way, the element of contradiction between human-natural essence and technological development is theoretically repressed by Marx, with the most significant consequences. For example, there can never be a question for Marx of putting the human natural requirement for positive freedom (e.g. a shorter "necessary" work day) ahead of the technological requirement of securing production development (e.g. making large automobiles for everyone):<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Consider this disturbing passage in Wage Labour and Capital where Marx allows for the unlimited growth of need-objects:

--however high it [the human dwelling] may shoot up in the course of civilization, if the neighbouring palace grows to an equal or even greater extent, the occupant of the relatively small house will feel more and more uncomfortable, dissatisfied and cramped within its four walls

--Our desires and pleasures spring from society; we measure them, therefore, by society and not by the objects which serve for their satisfaction (WLC, 57).

the two sorts of requirement are always consistent with one another for him, even though they obviously are not. Had he appreciated that technological development's creation of needs (which he recognizes) is at the same time the expansion of the realm of necessity (which deduction he shirks) then he would not have so crucially missed the tension between the former and human-natural essence. But as I've already mentioned, he has an uncritical temper with respect to technological development which blinds him too much.

Now how all this ties in with formal domination is as follows. I suggest that one of the coercive requirements of the (post-feudal) form of civilized life is to attempt to promote the production of ever more material goods: a requirement that is neatly consistent with and complementary to those two constraining requirements of ownership protection and increase I have already identified as underlying principles of the established social "game" (more particularly the requirement to attempt to increase one's ownership domains). That this requirement of production increase is not merely a capitalist ruling-class dictate to the ruled-class workers is attested to by the former's own blind subseivence to it, not to mention the revolutionary Marx's and Marxists'. The requirement in question is imposed on all members of modern society as a stipulation of its general form, and no one may flout it without liability to severe penalty, from social disapproval ("against Progress") to economic ruin. Even the overthrow of the capitalist ruling-class and its species of property in "Marxist" societies seems not to have



hindered its hold of formal domination much (i.e. production output here too a shibboleth immune to question). It stands as an historical given whose constraint is so monolithic that even the arch liberationist and revolutionist Marx himself counts a version of it as the ultimate "law" of civilized society and its violation, apparently, as historically impossible. It constitutes in short, formal domination par excellence.

It may be true of course, as Marx persistently reminds us, that various "laws" of capitalism lead to ever more technological development (i.e. "laws" of capitalist competition, constant-capital growth, etc.). But this production growth in line with the requirements of the capitalist ruling-class economic formation is hardly explicable as such when the same or similar imperative of production growth obtains in anti-capitalist-ruling-class societies guided by Marxian theory. Only, I think, the postulation of formal domination running beneath this or that ruling-class order of domination is able to explain the transepochal hold of the imperative in question. The latter is, it seems, a given dictate of the very form of life of all modern society, hardly less imperious in its hold than former inviolate laws universally believed to be sanctified by the Deity (the role of the Maker here, we might suppose, not yet assumed by Technology).

The final anomaly which I will suggest the postulation of formal, as opposed to merely ruling-class, domination helps to resolve is that of the decisive failure of the working-class in liberal democratic societies to vote workers' ownership of the means of production into political reality, as Marx considered progressively probable if

not inevitable with the secure achievement of universal suffrage. Though Marx certainly thought that the capitalist ruling-class was almost sure to turn to unconstitutional reactionary violence to forcibly prevent any such socialization of their ownership holdings from taking place, he did not envisage any other objective obstacle to workers' thus voting for the immense advancement of their own collective material interests. It was just a matter of organization and propaganda and they would do it, barring ruling-class nihilation of the liberal democratic process in the meantime.

However things have turned out rather differently from what Marx expected; there does seem to be some other objective obstacle to the workers' voting their collective material interests into political sway; and the problem is to explain it. Now of course one can use Marx's own ad hoc method of blaming inveterate stupidity, betraying leaders and so forth for the failure in question. But post facto selective scapegoating is generally a symptom of explanatory impotence, and does little to reduce that lingering sense of some other great restraint than vicious ruling-class capitalist power systematically blocking workers from electing workers' control into state office. I suggest that formal domination is this other great obstacle, underlying indeed ruling-class dominion as the coercive regulator maintaining workers in their historically established place.

Let me proffer an illustration. Smith is a young worker in an American factory who has some way or another been converted to a thoroughgoing socialist standpoint, and who attempts to advocate

to, and organize, those around him accordingly: in a manner that is visible to no capitalist ruling-class force (e.g. straw-boss, police, owner). Nevertheless, he meets, as he puts it, "a brick wall". His mother, his father, his fellow-workers, his friends -- themselves wage-slaves -- all agree he has, as they put it, "flipped out". After months of arguing with him -- generally in terms of support for the "American Way of Life" and denunciation of his "hurting us" -- they shift from such modes of intimate disapproval to outright ostracism. In the end, he is compelled to leave his home, his family, his job, his friends and his haunts until, as they put, it, he "makes sense" and "fits in" again.

Now it is just not possible to account adequately for this sort of case in terms of ruling-class repression alone. In absence of dedication to a species of devil theory, another deeper mechanism of coercive regulation is required for its satisfactory explanation. Needless to say, the notion of formal domination -- domination of the individual members of a society by a form of social life which is coercively imposed on each of them by all of them (and this formulation is only paradoxical if one denies the possibility of a "social" self imposing on an "individual" self in the same person) -- needless to say, this notion of formal domination provides precisely the explanatory framework to account for such phenomena as the above; which, in one variation or another, constitute the very stuff of sociohistorical repression and control. Indeed this domination by form of social life would seem here to underlie work-and-marketplace



ruling-class domination in a rather more concrete sense than that already subscribed to: as so to say the latter's "grass roots".

I suspect that a more detailed account of formal domination could provide any number of important phenomena of coercive rule which are explicable in its terms, but which remain anomalous to the Marxian analysis of domination in ruling-class terms alone. With almost any social formation, for example, such coercive dictates as those associated with speech, eating, dwelling and dress convention seem for the most part irreducible to explanation via ruling-class domination; yet they together constitute a veritable labyrinth of constraining walls against human life-activity in accordance with self-raised project. Indeed they form a framework of domination, a network of dictations to human action which must be complied with to stay alive in the society in question, so massive and basic and all-encompassing that obedience to them seems to those they bind almost a matter of conformity to physical laws. But despite this immense import qua human domination, despite the constraining regulation of what Marx himself saw as the very substance of all human society and history -- "eating and drinking, habitation and clothing" -- which this network of dictations involves -- despite all this, the Marxian ruling-class explanatory panacea of sociohistorical domination seems hardly even to apply here. On the other hand, yet again, the notion of a formal domination seems easily able to account for what stands anomalous to Marx's theory of domination.

(The theoretical plumbing required to comprehend the great

coercive network I have alluded to in terms of formal domination is not something that this essay has the purpose to provide. But it does not seem difficult to discern how what I've already said with regard to domination by form of social life applies to these manners or conventions of speaking, eating, dressing et al governing this or that social membership. The very use of the word "form" -- as in the expression "good form" and "bad form" -- indicates the connections here. Thus with, for example, the coercive dictate which requires members of the Masai tribe to wear dung in their hair, or, correspondingly, requires us to cover in specific layers our feet, legs and torsos with suits of clothing-armour, we cannot properly impute the obedience-extracting and immiserating prescription in question to domination by a ruling-class; but we certainly can properly impute it to a form of social life: which constrains all members of the society concerned as an historical given and which no one may violate without liability to severe social sanction. Now though it is tempting to sustain a proffering of such examples into many more pages of cathartic report, the amenability of all such conventions to explanation in terms of formal domination is too obvious to draw out any further. I might add in loose speculation, however, that I think so far as a civilized social formation goes, these specific restrictions of convention or manners relate to the general underlying principles of ownership protection and increase earlier identified, as the protocol of a game does to its internal

"point".<sup>15</sup>

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I have come now to the end of my argument against Marx's simplistic resolution of all sociohistorical domination into work-and-marketplace ruling-class domination. Though I am not going to re-traverse in summary the immense territory I have so briefly covered, there are three broad concluding points I want to make: with still the compressed deliberation featured throughout this essay. The first has to do with indicating why what I call "formal domination" must be considered the socially universal and primary structure of domination informing sociohistorical intercourse. The second has to do with rebutting the claim or subterranean conviction that our established structures of domination are indispensable to our species' continuance in a civilized state (however desirable partial or complete liberation from them may seem). And the third and final point has to do with pointing out some of the more crucial implications which my extra-Marxian analysis of domination has on pursuit of the appropriate course of human liberation. With these points -- again involving only the swift carve of outline -- my

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<sup>15</sup>Thus, for example, as the protocol regulations of wearing armour and uniforms are to the underlying principles of territory protection and seizure in the North American game of football, so are the protocol regulations of clothing identified above related to the underlying principles of ownership protection and increase in the established "game" of social intercourse in general. For my theory of sport as social paradigm, see "Philosophy of a Corner Linebacker", The Nation, Vol. 212, No. 3 (Jan/71) 83-6 and "Smash Thy Neighbour", The Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 229, No. 1 (Jan/72), 77-80.



enterprise ends.

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Formal domination is a socially universal structure of domination because, as I have already shown, all members of a society are subject to the given dictates it involves. Unlike ruling-class domination, by which only a certain class of the social membership is systematically constrained, domination by the form of social life coercively regulates every member of the society in question (which coercive regulation is, of course, quite consistent with the deviation of some of society's membership from it: the former only ceases to be such when deviation is no longer liable to penalty). In this sense then, formal domination is socially universal, as opposed to ruling-class domination which is only partial in its social hold.

The universality of formal domination obtains, furthermore, with respect to the dominating side as well as the dominated side of society's membership. That is, not only are all members of a society subject to the coercive dictates formal domination involves, but all are -- to some extent -- enforcers of such dictates: even the very deviant from its rule is liable to censure by his own "social self" for his deviance (as Freudian psychoanalysis has it, a "superego" mechanism of self-castigation which may be the most terrible enforcer of all). On the other hand, of course, ruling-class domination involves no such universality: the dominating side of its domination is restricted to a narrower segment still of society's membership than its dominated side. (Certainly this is the case with Marx's

ruling-class, which is confined to a tiny minority of society's membership.)

In short, formal domination embraces the whole of society's membership, both as coercers and coerced: whereas ruling-class domination is only segmental in both respects.

Though from this peculiar universality of social hold of formal domination, wanting in ruling-class domination, we might want to infer the former's primacy, this is not the claim I wish to advance here. Rather I am going to undertake a quite new, and I think more directly telling, line of argument for the primacy of formal vis à vis ruling-class domination. It is really a very simple argument and is obvious once one squarely faces a fact that Marx the philosopher strangely never really pays any heed to, though it is the very most primordial and eternal fact of the human condition. The fact in question is this: every person without exception dies within a time-span of a few decades. Members of the ruling-class are, of course, in no way exempt from the government of this iron law of human existence, though they may indeed be encouraged by their special privilege into special delusions of such exemption. And since every ruling-class member without exception has short shrift as an historical agent, so necessarily has every ruling-class member's material interests short shrift as historical influence. Thus the ruling-class of any society, and all their material interests, have really quite pathetic sway so far as the great continuum of history is concerned. They come and go like Ozymandiases writ small. All

this is true of any specific ruling-class membership and/or their material interests, whether taken individually or collectively.

What Marx does, however, is to ignore utterly this gross facticity of the human death-sentence and all it implies so far as the sway of ruling-class memberships and their material interest go: a theoretical extrusion of great moment which he seems to manage by usually conflating the personal and role referents of the concept "ruling-class". That is, this concept as it is generally employed in his work does not make clear the crucial distinction between "ruling-class" as it refers to a group of powerful people in a society (who soon die) and "ruling-class" as it refers to a set of powerful positions in a society (which do not soon die). And in this way, the sheer mortality of the former never emerges to present a problem to his view that ruling-class memberships and their material interests are the ultimate ground of social domination.

Yet, as we can easily see once the subjecthood of all ownership attachments to Nature's short stay of execution is recognized, no ruling-class membership nor their material interests ever lasts long enough to be so villainously responsible. Something underlying their domination has to be the proper candidate for this status. And the underlying something here is clearly the form of social life through whose roles of ownership ascendancy this or that ruling-class membership and their material interests function as merely temporary occupants, before some other equally short-lived membership succeeds them.



(None of the above of course should be misconstrued to mean that ruling-class memberships have no individual and/or collective responsibility for social domination: they certainly do to precisely that extent which they can choose to renounce or violate at cost their ascendant roles. Furthermore, they bear in the society concerned disproportionately large responsibility for failing to so choose inasmuch as their occupancy of ruling-class place confers upon them disproportionately large effective jurisdiction over that society's means of life and/or anti-life. All that is being claimed here is that the form of social life owns primacy as the sociohistorical ground of people's domination of one another, which is quite consistent with substantial ruling-class membership responsibility on a penultimate level).

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The second point with which I promised to engage before conclusion is "the claim of subterranean conviction" that domination is indispensable to man's continuance in a civilized state. Freud of course makes a version of this claim quite explicit in his social philosophy, but I suspect it has a much deeper and wider hold in man's beliefs generally: manifesting a transhistorical "form of social consciousness", to draw upon our earlier lexicon. And although it is a claim that has already been rejected in one way or another in the expositional body of this essay, it deserves because of its primordial influence (if not reasoned support) at least perfunctory rebuttal here on my own behalf.

To avoid convenient confusion about the extremity of my rebuttive position, I straightway acknowledge the following two claims as uncontroversially true (hermits aside):

- 1) People of any age or place require a common form of social life of some sort to survive either as individuals or as a community.
- 2) Such a common form of social life itself always involves production requirements stipulated by need-imposed necessity which must be met for the members of the society in question to survive either as individuals or as a community.

From neither of these acknowledged claims though, it is certain, can the principles of domination adduced in this essay be properly inferred, or indeed anything like them: despite the easy habit of so reasoning to which men have, in various ways, long been disposed (e.g. inferring from the requirement of social "order" the requirement of coercive "authority" to impose it; inferring from the requirement of production to meet needs the requirement of "men in charge" to dictate it). It is quite consistent with (1), for example, all that people own society's means of life (or anti-life) in common as opposed to some people owning them monopolistically, and that their use and disposal of these means is in accordance with mutual and creative agreement rather than ruler-dictates. Indeed the hold in a society of these principles of liberation rather than of domination is itself obviously constitutive of a common form of social life, and a more durable -- because non-antagonistic -- such common form at that. Then as well it is quite consistent with

(2) that the same principles of liberation rather than of domination obtain in a society: the production requirements stipulated by need-imposed necessity -- precisely because they are need-imposed or, otherwise put, derive from the natural seat of motivation obtaining in all members of the society in question -- are quite as adequately satisfiable by common ownership and project-agreement as they are by monopolist ownership and monopoly-owner command. Indeed there is good reason to suppose that the former form of social life much more adequately than the latter meets the claims of human need-requirements, inasmuch as (if Marx is right, and I judge he is) it is an essential need of people to act in accordance with (individually or co-operatively) self-raised project: an essential need which the former (the liberative) form of social life by definition meets, and which the latter (the dominating) form of social life by definition fails to meet. That as well the former necessarily precludes, and the latter contingently ensures, the possibility of need-requirements not being properly met for many by virtue of the rest's monopoly power to exclude them from need-objects, tells still again in favour of the former (the liberative) form of social life more adequately meeting need-imposed necessity than the latter (the dominating) form of social life. So, in sum, the requirements of need-imposed necessity do not support the familiar but facile conclusion that domination is indispensable to such necessity's being properly satisfied, but on the contrary support the less familiar but well founded conclusion that domination is a positive hindrance to such necessity's being adequately met.



The briefest of analyses thus exposes the fraudulence of inferring from men's requirements of common form of social life and of production to meet need-imposed necessity the conclusion that domination is socially indispensable. Not only does this inference not follow from the premises in question, but there are good reasons to suppose that the very opposite conclusion in favour of the social indispensability of liberation is far more plausibly yielded. In any case, domination certainly cannot properly be said to be indispensable to civilized social survival on the grounds identified. Such ratiocination, however commonplace, hardly deserves further notice.

Another favorite if less vague argument for the indispensability of domination to men's civilized survival is that people are by nature so aggressively self-interested that they require a master's dictates simply to keep them from perpetually attacking one another (Kant, for example, argues this way in his Idea of a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View: not to mention the better known arguments of Hobbes). Well, I've already dealt with a form of this argument in Chapter I ("Human Nature") where I sponsored the rejoinder that postulation of such human-natural disposition constitutes a needless multiplication of entities, and that men's behaviour of aggressive self-interest can be explained without any such speculative postulation of innate program behind it (e.g. by scarcity and established social relations). What I've already said in this present section on civilized society's coercive form of social life which requires of its members on pain of extreme social penalty, to attempt

to protect and increase their ownership stakes, lends further substance to this rejoinder: again the gist (by implication) of my position here being that men's behaviour of aggressive self-interest requires no Occam-violating postulation of inborn dictate to explain it, when coercive social structure can account for such behaviour with no such theoretical invention. Indeed the very fact that this form of social life is systematically coercive in its requirement of aggressive self-interest tells against natural disposition towards the same: for if it were truly inherent in men's nature to so behave, then the systematic coercion to so behave would be gratuitous and a massive anomaly.

The above are by no means the only effective rejoinders to the postulation of human-natural disposition to aggressive self-interest as a ground from which the indispensability of overlords follows. Even granting the existence of such a nature-given program in humans (an illicit grant in my view), the argument in question still seems to fail. For if men are all thus intrinsically disposed to aggressive self-interest, then those who dominate are similarly afflicted and their position of domination ensures thus no control of aggressive self-interest in society at all and, besides, gives them more enablement than before in this direction. Then, again, it does not seem any more to follow from the natural impulse to aggressive self-interest that a dominator is required to keep men from behaving in accordance with it, than it follows from the natural impulse to defecate on the spot that a dominator is required to keep

men from defecating. Natural impulse is incontrovertibly subject to self-directed restraint; and why what is obvious in the latter case is not so obvious in the former is something the position I am rebutting simply never considers, in perhaps convenient enthusiasm to justify masters.

Another standard argument (advanced indeed by some Marxists) for the indispensability of domination to man's continuance in a civilized state is a more convincing variation on part of the first general argument of this sort with which I engaged: that is, that domination is technologically necessary. Here the more specific claim is that in an advanced industrial society, the great complexity of the production process is such that its government by co-operatively raised project is simply impracticable. People generally are just not equipped, nor can they be equipped, to understand adequately the grand intricacy of this production process in which they are involved: and lacking thus the primal requisite of appropriate decision-making in this regard, they must pay the price for their technologically-enabled material abundance, and obey the dictates of those specially qualified in these matters, technical experts. To ensure, in short, that the productive system achieves or sustains an advanced stage of development and efficiency, domination by technical experts is indispensable.

The essential problem with this sort of argument, however is that it fails to take into account a crucial and proper distinction between requirements which take the form of explicated mutually advantageous recommendation by experts to non-experts, and requirements



which take the form of non-explicated mutually advantageous dictate by experts to non-experts: requirements which are satisfiable in the former sort of relationship by agreement to follow such recommendation for appreciated reasons and satisfiable in the latter sort of relationship by obedience to the dictator experts to avoid substantial harm to self. In both cases, the general incompetence of people in adequate technological understanding, the contrary competence of experts in these same matters, and the achievement or maintenance of technological advancement as social necessity are granted premises -- no quarrel is being raised here (though one might well be warranted). What -- again -- is being criticized here is the inference from these premises that domination is indispensable to the satisfaction of expert-discerned technological requirements. Clearly, as our distinction above shows, such inference by no means follows. Technological requirements, even of an advanced productive complex, are satisfiable in other manner: informed not by the principles of domination at all but, on the contrary, those of liberation. Indeed insofar as this latter form by its very nature involves the non-expert majority in a continuing educative process in technological matters, while the former form by its very nature precludes such a process; insofar as the latter form by its very nature involves the integrated co-operation of experts and non-experts in resolution of technological problematic, while the former by its very nature precludes such co-operation; and insofar as the former by its very nature prevents production-derogating "meaninglessness" of task, while the latter

form by its very nature promotes it -- insofar, that is, as the form of liberation necessarily enables producer education, integration and sense of purpose which the form of domination just as necessarily curtails, the form of liberation would seem a superior social form of productive engagement by technological criterion alone. Far from being disqualified by the rigour of advanced productive criterion as "impracticable", as the argument in question would have it, the form of liberation would seem to qualify as preferable to that of domination by just this standard.

I might add here that analogous and just as important rebuttal of the "domination is technologically indispensable" line of thought can be made with respect to the adult/youth framework of intercourse. That is, to claim that the young must obey the dictates of the adults (like the non-experts, the experts above) for the society in question to achieve or sustain its stage of technological advancement, the same sort of counter can be returned: technological -- or, more broadly, survival -- requirements are at least as satisfiable here within a form of explication and agreement as within a form of command and coercion. Indeed in this adult/youth context, a form of liberation seems much more decisively preferable to a form of domination in meeting material survival requirements than is the case with the expert non-expert case above. For here, explication by the more to the less informed, and the latter's understanding agreement with such explication, is intrinsic imperative: the very point of the upbringing process, and not -- as in the above case -- merely an arguable

advantage for ultimate direct producer output. A form of domination, on the other hand, is necessarily antithetical to the upbringing process's very telos as it involves command in place of explication, and coercion in place of understanding.

Lest the rejoinder to all this be that I have improperly assumed agreement to follow from explication, and thus have missed the essential problem of the form of liberation in meeting survival requirements -- which is that agreement does not so easily follow, but is regularly tortuous in achievement and hence prejudicial to the satisfaction of the ever-insistent harsh claims of "the reality principle". -- I have only this to say. Agreement that does not follow from explicated proposal presents a situation -- coercion ruled out -- where explication must be rendered more illuminating, or proposal altered to more agreeable form, to effect such concordance. Since either of these modifications constitutes a positive development in social understanding, the initial failure of agreement is not so much abortive in issue, as pregnant with higher possibility; not so much to be avoided as deleterious, as to be prized as the ground of emergent mutual apprehension. Explicated proposal from which agreement does not easily follow is hardly then as rebuttive to my position as it may first appear. It is, on the contrary, prime substance of this position's attraction. Should a conviction without good reason and in ultimate philistinism still persist that domination is somehow indispensable and liberation somehow impracticable in civilized human affairs, I suspect that the grounds of such conviction



may be causal rather than rational. After all, the form of social life within which we relate to one another, and have since time immemorial, is one governed by principles of domination, not liberation: so, that conventional thought with action might be thoroughly bound to such a form is not an altogether unlikely possibility. Men are not undispensed to the pattern of ratiocination of whatever is and has been must be. The fixed belief of commonsense that human-kind has to operate within a framework of domination to resolve the ruinous bents and clashes of self-interest into some kind of order -- whether technological or moral or legal or whatever -- a fixed belief that would seem to provide the common "reason" informing arguments for domination, seems simply closed to the possibility that such "ruinous bents and clashes of self-interest" are not resolved by a dominion-structured form of social life so much as enjoined by it. For if the underlying governing principles of this established form of social life are indeed ones of protection and increase of one's ownership stakes, society's regulation by such principles would seem rather to systematically enforce "the bents and clashes of self-interest" of people than to regulatively mitigate them. If this is so, then arguments for the indispensability of such a dominion-structured form of social life seem more than a little close to instantiating ultimately the general and absurd argument form: "The way to prevent x is to coercively prescribe it."

In the end, I am tempted to think that arguments for the indispensability of domination and the impracticability of liberation

in the civilized human condition relate to the underlying form of social life with all its mechanisms of class rule as, in narrower form, ideology relates to the work-and-marketplace economic order in Marx's theory: arguments, that is, which in virtue of their "correspondence" to this underlying form of social life, and not in virtue of their rational power, are "selected" for survival on the sociohistorical stage. On the other hand, I am complementarily suspicious that contrary arguments against domination and for liberation are in virtue of their thoroughgoing "contradiction" with the underlying form of social life, and not in virtue of their want of rational power, fated by the same mechanism of "social selection" to extinction on this sociohistorical stage. I suspect, in short, that a continuing dogged rejection of arguments for liberation may not be philosophically but socially determined, and that therefore still further counters to it here may well be rationally futile. With this concluding provocation, I rest my case.

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The third and final point I want to raise has to do with some of the more significant implications which my extra-Marxian analysis of social domination has on the question of social liberation from it. The gist of my whole contention against Marx has been that his preoccupation with the work-and-marketplace ruling-class order as ultimately the only order of domination to be transcended to achieve a "realm of freedom" for humankind is a preoccupation which drastically fails to appreciate the enormous complexity and range of

domination frameworks by which sociohistorical intercourse is and has been governed. Other, non-derivative structures of domination regulate sociohistorical intercourse, I have demonstrated, that have to be recognized and engaged with as well as the work-and-marketplace order of rule if any such "realm of freedom" is to be adequately sought: structures of domination picked out not only by Marx's own implied principles of domination (e.g. adult/youth and male/female orders of rule), but -- just as importantly -- by systematically revised principles of domination which subsume in their reference "psychological" as well as material means of life, "term" as well as "private" ownership, "forces of destruction" as well as forces of production and, finally "formal" as well as class rule. In the end, what emerges from my analysis is a great system of social domination frameworks within which Marx's work-and-marketplace ruling-class order is just one important part: a system whose operation is ultimately in terms of an all-encompassing form of social life -- within which the entire social membership is constrained to act including those members who for the nonce belong to the work-and-marketplace or any other ruling-class. Thus, on the grounds of this analysis of social domination, the enterprise of radical liberation, of seeking a "realm of freedom" in the human condition, stands as a vastly broader project than Marx's narrow notion of revolutionizing merely one locus of rule would have it.

Indeed, I might add here in critical complement, the hold of domination seems considerably deeper in its roots than Marx conceived too: running back to the very origins of human society into which the



Marxian eye for servitude never seriously penetrates. That the way of domination has in fact this aboriginal grip on human affairs may be deduced (though oddly never has been) from the surviving ideological remains of pre-literate tribal societies which almost without exception indicate the principles of domination as the governing logic of their religious conception. The figure or figures of the divine, that is, are in virtually all these societies' religious systems of self-understanding the monopoly owners of some means of life or anti-life: for the granting or withholding of which the members of the society in question must offer some form or other of obedient life activity in return. Whether one looks to the pre-ancient remnants of Hinduism or Judaism, animism or Greek polytheism, this exchange of domination is the governing underlying form of men's relations with their heavenly patrons. And whether such exchange of domination involves sacrificial rite and/or fulsome praise and/or duteous behaviour or whatever as the form of obedient life-activity the human subordinate must yield this or that divine lord for the latter's proprietary favours, and whether such exchange of domination is thought elevating covenant and/or fearful submission or whatever -- it is in principle an exchange of domination between ruling monopoly owner and ruled needful subject nevertheless. The principles of domination seem to govern here with as great theoretical purity as they govern a nineteenth century English factory or an ancient slave-farm. And if we accept the historical materialist method of inferring social structure from religious ideology, then the latter here demonstrates the way of domination really informing

the former. But in any case, the way of domination would seem to have roots literally older than recorded history, if only between men and their celestial masters.

So, the problematic of the way of domination would seem to have a deeper as well as broader hold on human affairs than Marx's civilized work-and-marketplace focus discloses. Accordingly, man's liberation from this way of domination would seem a profounder as well as more socially embracing task than Marx's counsel of proletarian-revolution-against-capitalists would simplistically have it. Let me now indicate then, if only with the ellipsis of aphorism, some of the more important implications which my extra-Marxian analysis of domination seems to have with regard to the liberation of human-kind from it. With these concluding curt probes, I am done.

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The proletariat do not specially qualify for the historical role of human liberators. For as predominantly male and adult, they are themselves dominators of female and youth under-classes. And as substantial part of the collective mechanism of formal domination which underlies all ruling-class domination including that of work-and-marketplace, they are themselves party to their own domination in the latter sphere itself as well as elsewhere. Further, by virtue of their very material deprivation which Marx so relentlessly exposes, they are relatively disabled from adopting the way of liberation in any sphere of domination: the economic base of their historical adherence to the way of domination in general, and in particular, where

they themselves own the role of dominators (e.g. as fathers and husbands).<sup>16</sup> In short, given our broader analysis of domination, the direct producers come out as far from the uniquely unsullied victim-class to whom to look as the great emancipator of mankind. They are as deeply held in the way of domination as any of society's membership if not more.

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On the other hand, the work-and-marketplace ruling-class whom the direct producers serve are by no means the only or even the main force of repression inhibiting human liberation. In part due to the role of the direct producers here in the all-embracing mechanism of formal domination, the members of this ruling-class are themselves constrained by the given form of social life: even in the work-and-marketplace where they penultimately rule. Furthermore, in other frameworks of domination than the latter, the very wealth they have derived therefrom gives them special material enablement to pursue the way of liberation: the economic base of their or the intellectuals' they patronize liberative forays in the realms of purely formal domination, not to mention adult/youth and male/female spheres of domination (e.g. more liberative leisure mores and family relations). In short,

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<sup>16</sup>The relative economic disablement of workers here is not of course the same with respect to the work-and-marketplace order of rule (where they are dominated) as with respect to the adult/youth and male/female orders of rule (where they are dominators). In the former case, such disablement is historically speaking "deterministic" in the sense outlined in Chapter VIII. In the latter cases, such disablement is never "deterministic" in any sense, with perhaps the by-gone exception of working-class fathers being constrained to press their children into paid employment to keep themselves and their families alive.



the work-and-marketplace ruling-class under our universalized concept of domination is not the one and only dominating group in society, but on the contrary bears in certain crucial respects the potential and even actuality of human liberation. (Marx himself, we might recall, lived off the avails of the capitalist Engels' Manchester factory: indicating the enablement of work-and-marketplace rulers and those they patronize to forge the way of liberation even within the work-and-marketplace).

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From the above, we may conclude that mankind's liberation is not merely a class-divided affair where one class is simply on the side of domination (i.e. the capitalists) and another class merely on the side of liberation (i.e. the proletariat). Both classes have important and substantial enablements to liberate: the capitalists for reasons I defer to above, and the proletarians for reasons Marx has already made famous. And both classes have important, if disproportionate, stakes and rootedness in forms of domination: the capitalists for reasons Marx has long ago forcibly demonstrated and the proletarians for reasons I have already indicated. Insofar as no one class is wholly responsible for domination nor any one class uniquely enabled in the way of liberation, both the hold of the former and the quest of the latter cut across Marxian class lines. The problem and the solution both are held in common, albeit in unequal shares.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>None of this is meant to rule out class struggle of the Marxian sort as a part of the liberative enterprise. To say cont'd

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Workers' or workers' representatives seizing control of the state and governing society as a "dictatorship of the proletariat" -- the Marxian strategy of liberation -- is obviously not adequate, even as intermediate step, to the pervasive problem of domination as it has been identified here. The principles of domination, it has been demonstrated, govern human behaviour too broadly and deeply for any such restricted overthrow of domination-structure to be even transitionally adequate to the requirements of liberation: even granting here that such workers' movement is historically possible in industrialized countries and that it in fact does represent an authentically liberative move rather than mere rhetorical guise for rule by a new class of "term" owning public administrators. One might argue, as I already have, that neither of these grants is easily admissible and that the Marxian program is not likely to be achieved in advanced capitalist societies and -- where it is achieved in other "peasant" societies -- is not clearly liberative even in the work-and-marketplace (merely in effect replacing here one "private" owner ruling-class with another "term" owner ruling-class, albeit a far less exploitatively enabled ruling-class with its temporally restricted ownership powers). But even if we namely by-pass such critical considerations -- grounding historical possibility on historical achievement

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that the liberative enterprise "cuts across Marxian class lines" is not to deny that a crucial part of this enterprise may obtain within Marxian class lines at the same time.

in quite dissimilar conditions, and assuming so to speak that the greater material security of a national boarding school is more qualified for the status of freedom than the lesser material security of a national honky-tonk -- we are still left with a Marxian mode of liberation which is altogether too limited a solution to the permeative problematic of domination. Even granting in short the not altogether plausible claims of Marxism to solution of domination by a ruling-class in the work-and-marketplace, its program of human liberation still remains quite inadequate to the hold of the way of domination on the human condition as a whole. This way of domination, as we have seen, governs mankind as a form of life almost akin in its grip to the prescriptions of physical instinct (which status in fact the crudest "realism" often affords it).

On the other hand, the very universality and depth of hold of the way of domination would seem to require to be transcended a universality and depth of liberative enterprise that only members of society qua individuals are able to mount in the first instance. It would be comforting to think that groups, classes or collectives could begin as a body to reprogram themselves to the liberative way of life -- and undoubtedly such a radical transformation of the social body would have to take place somehow if the way of liberation were to take historical hold -- but the restructuring required here is so embracing and so intrinsic at the same time that it is difficult to imagine how the liberative way can in fact be initiated by the well-known refractory clumsiness and impercipientness of collective action as



hitherto known: not to mention the anti-liberative disposition of collectives to purely formal domination even in the process of intended emancipation (as the totalitarian and increasingly purely formal domination informing the current People's Republic of China most trenchantly illustrates). Some several millenia of history have already passed with the all-encompassing way of domination hardly altered in principle (though assuredly in extremity of penalties) as human form of life, so one might properly speculate that the radical departure involved in its alteration to a liberated way is really of the order of artistic invention: of the order, that is, of mutationally original human life-construction, manageable in the beginning only by the creative imagination of individual agency in integral pursuit of life itself as art-form. Not the traditional confinement of aesthetic pursuit to the mere raising of isolated artifice for leisure spectacle, but the opening of projective imagination to the dizzying raw matter of one's being itself for formulation into new liberative pattern: man here, with Marx, as driven artist -- urging towards realization of the human essence and the way of liberation simultaneously in the creative praxis masterpiece of the good life. Otherwise put, the philosophical mission pursued in its profoundest sense.

The ultimate revolutionary task in short, may lie in its gestation with the individual as existential artisan.

The way of liberation involves obviously the transformation in practice of the two principles of the ensconced way of domination --

monopoly ownership of the means of life/anti-life and extraction therefrom of obedient life-activity -- into other, transcending grammar of action: into that is, co-operative access to/dissolution of means of life/anti-life and life-activity in accordance with self-raised project (whether individually or co-operatively forged). Such revolutionary transformation of form of life is, against Marx, to a large extent within the immediate domain of praxis possibility (albeit strenuous possibility, given the established coercive regimen of social intercourse) of any ordinary man of any contemporary, technologically advanced society.

Note the qualifying phraseology here of "to a large extent", "man" and "contemporary, technologically-advanced". I so qualify because it is clear from the foregoing analysis of domination that deviance from the established form of social life is liable to survival-endangering penalty: even the occupant of the role of dominator is himself subject to formal domination which constrains his endeavour to perpetuation of his rule. Hence holus-bolus pursuit of the way of liberation is clearly not at all unconditionally possible if the pursuer is not to suffer extinction. But such pursuit is possible to a man, "to a large extent", consistent with his survival, inasmuch as -- all ignored by Marx -- qua adult male he occupies the role of dominator vis à vis women (e.g. his conjugal partner) and youth (e.g. his children), and qua thus elevated member of the community he occupies the role of important participant in the collective mechanism of formal domination: all of which role occupancy he can

revolutionarily transform in accordance with the principles of liberation in a contemporary technologically-advanced society where, for a complex of reasons, the essential penalty he faces for such liberative transformation is social disapprobation. Simply as an ordinary man, an individual, in technologically enabled circumstances it is possible for him across a very broad and crucial range of social relationship to pursue the way of liberation without substantial threat to his survival.

A man who thus liberatively transforms his way of life -- the work-and-marketplace order of domination which fixates Marx aside -- has thereby largely achieved the mutating gestation of "the new man", the liberated and liberating man, already. Though a concrete description of the radical change in moment-to-moment way of life which must be involved in such transformation is not of course possible here, suffice it to say that virtually every facet of extra-work intercourse with others would require fundamental conversion from its conventional pattern by any such adoption in action of the grammar of liberation. Since the most historically far-reaching consequences of this transmutation in way of life obtain in the upbringing sphere (for reasons I have already alluded to earlier), let me proffer brief illustration of how just one characteristic moment in the great continuum of encounter between a man and his children might undergo radical restructuring by the former's pursuit of the proposed way of liberation rather than the archetypal way of domination. Let us, that is, glimpse the general through the lens of paradigmatic particular.



The father confronts the specific situation of his children's dangerous incursions into a heavily-trafficked street. Governed by the established principles of domination conventionally informing the adult/youth sphere of social intercourse, he gives a dictate to their action, and exchanges with their subsequent behaviour grant or withdrawal of means of life (e.g. tools of play), or restraint or application of means of anti-life (e.g. physical beating), in accordance with the children's obedient or disobedient life-activity in conformity to his command. Governed on the other hand by the principles of liberation in such situation, his way of relating to his children is fundamentally transformed. Instead of a dictate to their action, he constructs an adequate explication to their understanding (e.g. of the dangers of the street to their well-being, explication which itself requires creative project on his part to adequately communicate to their sensibility): from which explication, the children by themselves or with his help are enabled to raise the project of precautionary measure with respect to the street, and to self-directedly execute in action the project in question. Then too, in accordance with the principles of liberation as opposed to domination, the father does not grant/withhold means of life/anti-life in return for his children's life-activity in this regard (otherwise the structure of domination persists, with merely implicit in place of explicit dictate); but on the contrary there is co-operative access to/dissolution of means of life/anti-life with no effective monopoly ownership in these regards being held to ground this -- or any other -- exchange

of domination (any continued dangerous street incursion by his children here not inviting penalty, but more effective explanation, in return). In such manner the father himself pursues the way of liberation, and in so doing liberates others; and, as these others are themselves formed in character by such mode of upbringing to behave similarly in the future, the father here most significantly historically liberates as well. All utterly outside work-and-market-place sphere, collective proletarian political movement or assault upon capitalist ownership which preoccupy the Marxian viewpoint of human liberation.

Indeed insofar as the way of domination here involves threat to well-being in the very process of putatively securing it, insofar as it shifts the area of concern from prudence with respect to the street to fear of the father's reprisals, and insofar as it fails thereby to provide for safe behaviour except within the area of the latter's sphere of enforcement, it is respectively inconsistent, distractive and ineffectual with regard to realization of the objective in question: let alone promotive of crucial carry-over difficulties of familial antagonism (all based on such parental frustration of children's human-essence realization?), children's cognitive arrest (all based on such negation of practical explication opportunity?) and so on. On the other hand, the way of liberation here is consistently solicitous of the children's well-being, maintains integrity in the sphere of concern, and provides by its logic of self-direction for safe behaviour without as well as within the adult's range of

discernment: let alone enabling crucial carry-over benefits such as familial harmony, children's cognitive development, and so on. In sum, the father's government here of his action by the principles of liberation rather than of domination involves a radical revolution in form of behaviour, while at the same time promoting thereby systematically more efficacious realization of human survival objective than is afforded by the way of domination (not to mention crucial carry-over benefits rather than difficulties via the same revolution in grammar of action). Such a change can be generalized, I think, across the entire sphere of adult/youth relationship. For the very problems of cognitive immaturity and "reality principle" urgency which are I think the essential grounds for the claimed indispensability of the way of domination, are admitted to this case in the extremest form, and yet the situation in question is in no way less susceptible to more effective government by the principles of liberation for all that.

If one allows that liberative revolution of the adult/youth structure of domination is both a socially easier and more historically effective revolution to achieve than of the work-and-marketplace, and that as I have briefly shown here even the most apparently difficult problem arising therein is more efficaciously resolvable by the way of liberation than the way of domination, and that as well almost every social member is in a position during his or her<sup>18</sup> lifetime of

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<sup>18</sup>For reasons of economy, I have completely ignored reference here to the female underclass. But at least the following needs to cont'd



effecting in praxis such revolution within the central social sphere of the family, the feasible pursuit of human liberation altogether outside the Marxian ambit of consideration is already largely clarified as individual project.

As far as that more or less all-adult-male sphere of domination holding Marx's exclusive focus goes -- the work-and-marketplace -- here too our analysis of domination indicates praxis possibilities of liberative enterprise for the ordinary individual enabled by contemporary, advanced technological context: without at all necessarily ruling out, I might add, the collective mode of action Marx recommends in this connection but wrongly presumes to be uniquely effective. First of all, by the very way of liberation pursued in non-work-and-marketplace spheres of social intercourse to which brief illustration

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be said:

- 1) Pursuit of the way of liberation of our so-called "ordinary man" with respect to the female underclass is as rich in praxis possibility and import -- though for different reasons -- as with respect to the youth underclass.
- 2) Such pursuit in such respects obviously involves important "overlapping". For example, by following the way of liberation with respect to youth, the man in question is at the same time necessarily following this way with respect to female youth: hence in this manner necessarily liberating members of the female underclass while liberating members of the youth underclass. On the other hand, by pursuing the way of liberation with respect to women (e.g. his conjugal partner), the man in question is at the same time promoting via "carryover" influence the liberation of youth (e.g. his children) whose upbringing is, as a matter of fact, largely in women's hands: hence in this manner, contingently liberating members of the youth underclass while liberating members of the woman underclass. The liberative enablements of the "ordinary man" are in these further ways importantly compounded. Should we desire a class-slogan to replace "Working men of the world, unite. You have nothing to lose but your chains", it might be "men of the world, liberate. You have nothing to lose but the chains of your women and children"

is given above, indirect liberative subversion of the work-and-marketplace order of rule is already set in motion. That is, free youth must eventually graduate to the latter sphere already habituated in their formative years to the way of liberation: hence as such proximate liberative agencies in this sphere by their very character-structure and personal history. Indeed even if we do narrowly restrict with Marx our attention to the work-and-marketplace order of domination alone, it is difficult to understand how an historical perspective like his could fail to fasten on precisely this crucial if not indispensable long range strategy of human liberation.

Then too, if our analysis of domination is accepted which holds domination by the form of social life to be the ultimate and primary framework of domination by which even the membership of the work-and-marketplace ruling-class itself is bound, whatever liberatively alters this form must at the same time liberatively alter that which it governs and underlies (i.e. the work-and-marketplace order of rule). And the individual, enabled by the contemporary technologically advanced milieu in which he lives, certainly would seem able to liberatively alter this form of social life if only insofar as, consistent with his survival, he ceases to collaborate with its given dictates and their collective enforcement. That such individual non-collaboration with the form of social life would in fact achieve a liberative alteration of the latter follows necessarily from the collaboration of this individual as constituent part of its collective mechanism: for formal domination is such by virtue of all society's

members imposing on each, hence even one of its members not so imposing either on himself or others breaks this formal domination's universal hold, however on the face of it limitedly. Certainly, as I've already argued, any such non-collaboration is difficult in the face of the universalized pressures of formal domination which not only come from without (e.g. social disapproval of inability to secure or increase ownership holdings as "failure") but from within (one's "social" self similarly castigating), but it is nevertheless possible consistent with survival in the affluent milieu to which we are referring ("No-one starves here any more"). And certainly too, such individual non-collaboration is exceedingly rare if not unheard of: workers, petty-bourgeois and capitalists alike, attempt to protect their ownership holdings and to increase them by exchange for the highest exclusive payoff to self they can get, whether in money, status or whatever. (Even the Marxist worker presses for higher wages for himself = more money for himself = more command over other workers' labour-power past and present, in notable collaboration with the established form of social life: like Marx, so preoccupied with capitalist ascendancy that he fails to discern his own role in perpetuating -- while putatively attacking -- the very underlying way of life by which the former's rule is enabled). But again, despite all this, individual non-collaboration with the form of social life in question is possible, as I have here characterized possibility: and indeed because of all this, such non-collaboration would seem indispensable as well if the monolithic grip



of this form is to be even initially loosed from its collective hold.

To thus cease in the work-and-marketplace to collaborate with the sovereign dictates of this form of social life -- or, in general terms, to cease to favour or disfavour action as it promotes or derogates from ownership protection/increase -- would enjoin of course a radical change in mode of job and consumer existence: a great wrench from, and hence in, the established form of social life in the sphere where its underlying hold is most stringently given. Certainly speech itself, if not indeed mode of thought, would have to change its conventional pattern here: for example, no sort of collaborative respect for superiors, promotions, raises, wealth, etc. as such, and no sort of collaborative derogation of economic inferiors, social deviance, failure to advance, etc. as such either. And certainly both work-and-marketplace mode of action would have to alter radically too: both collaborative choice and pursuit of job-activity to secure ascendant salary, status, position etc., for oneself and collaborative consumption of status goods or ownership-fawning media material. And so on and so on. A fundamental change -- all of it consistent with one's survival -- would seem required just to cease personal collaboration with the form of social life underlying work-and-marketplace ruling-class domination: perhaps no less a fundamental revolution in way of life for the worker than the private or term monopoly owner who dominates him, and with whom he would -- in accordance with quite the same grammar of action governing the former -- seem readily disposed to exchange

position given the opportunity. That merely such individual non-collaboration with formal domination would break the latter's universal hold is not I think just a logical point of little social import. Rather such a "break" seems in its societal repercussion to resemble in type that case of the fabled child singly refusing collaboration with the collectively enforced formal domination whose given dictate is that the Emperor indeed sports a suit of clothes: the "break", that is, of a social spell whose binding of all begins to lose its hold with the clear dissidence of even the lowliest of its captives.

Of course, as I have already indicated, none of this very perfunctory adumbration of the liberative enablement of the ordinary individual in the work-and-marketplace sphere is meant to imply the inefficacy of collective emancipatory action in this sphere. For it is the plainest recommendation of common sense that once undertaken the latter must diminutivize the former as effective force of this or any other sort of broad social change. But what I am claiming here is that despite this the individual still has even in the work-and-marketplace his own sort of important liberative enablement qua individual, given that the underlying structure of formal domination here involves his own collaboration in its effective operation: an enablement which Marx altogether misses here and elsewhere in his blindness to the crucial personal dimension of both domination and liberation; and an enablement whose pursuit may indeed constitute an indispensable historical initiation of the way

of liberation in this sphere as well as others. However, so far as non-individual or collective emancipatory action in the work-and-marketplace sphere goes, even here our analysis of domination indicates a rather different mode of such action than Marx himself spells out. That is, if it is granted as I have tried to show that there is a whole system of domination frameworks governing social intercourse of which the capitalist/proletarian structure of rule is only one, and (like all the rest of ruling-class structures) derivative from formal domination at that, then clearly collective emancipatory action appropriately takes many other forms than merely proletarians struggling against capitalists. Though such might indeed prove taxing to the Marxist intellectual who prefers struggle against the abstract enemy of the capitalist to struggle against, say, his immediate institution's hierarchial structure, still such polyversity of collective action would seem to foster an adequacy of liberative enterprise which the Marxian program gravely lacks. And it would seem to promote as well a firmer consistency of collective liberative action which merely proletarian organized movement against capitalists fails to achieve when, as is frequently the case in contemporary advanced technological context, such movement does not appear to work against capitalists or capital so much as against unorganized non-capitalists, and for thoroughgoing collaboration with the underlying form of social life's principle of ownership acquisitiveness. In short, our analysis of domination has extra-Marxian implications for collective as well as individual liberative action in the



work-and-marketplace. In allowing the latter it does not at all rule out the former, but on the contrary radically amplifies the scope of its appropriate undertaking.

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### Speculative Postscript

The quest for liberation has been underway since, as mythically remembered, Adam disobeyed God and Prometheus, Zeus or, literally put, man violated given rules of dominator proprietorship pretending to absolute status. From action in accordance with monopoly ownership and given dictate, to action in accordance with co-operative access and creative project -- such was the transformation momentarily if momentarily effected by the fabled founders of Western man. However, as the penalties of eternal "sweat of thy brow" to Adam and chains to Prometheus also mythically remind us, the way of liberation is but occasional episode in a general drama of domination. In the archetypal memory of our race it works against the very order of things, and is fated to ruin.

Such are the reminders of our most ancient accounts of the way of liberation. Yet the labours of history to the present would seem contrarily and increasingly to enfranchise its possibility with a number of crucial and connected developments, most of which seem to be enabled by -- or variations on -- technological developments. The major amongst these is not, as Marx held, the disciplining, organizing and uniting of workers by the production process itself (CI, 763). For since this production process is owned and governed

according to Marx's own account by capitalists, such "disciplining, organizing and uniting of the workers by the production process itself" is by implication in terms of capitalist ownership and government and hardly thus worker-liberating (whatever Hegelian master-slave dialectical legerdemain may mislead us here). At best "the production process itself" eases, by its concentration of masses, collective organization -- as easily fascist as communist -- outside it. Rather more significant technologically enabled developments contributing to the strength of possibility of the way of liberation in the contemporary human condition, I should think, have to do with historically unprecedented upbringing modes, mass information-systems, material-welfare schemes, consciousness-expanding drugs, and polyverse "liberation" movements. But whatever the developments which may be said to promote the counter-mythic possibility of the way of liberation, and however much at the same time these and other developments may at the same time promise re-enforcement of the way of domination, this possibility of humankind's liberation -- if also of its greater domination -- would seem to have grown to maturity since *those first* fabled breaths of freedom from Adam and Prometheus. In a word, I suspect the long ownership contest and way of domination is to be decisively transcended by, or repressive of, the way of liberation in our time: Manichaeian prophecy funded by such current ultimate polarities as globe-exploding bombs and mass-lib projects the extent of which the world has never seen nor can, I think, for long accommodate together.

There seems to be this long grown "split" in man expressed in the contrasting ways of domination and liberation. On the one hand are power to use or enjoy and exclude others from doing so, monopoly leverage, and enforced command. On the other, are power to use or enjoy and include others in doing so, co-operative access, and creative project. These ways of domination and liberation, in turn, are reflected in contrasting ethics. On the one hand are commands of property, authority and punishment. On the other are invocations of sharing, co-operation and artistry. The former of these ways/ethics is the coercive institutional side of human life ("the rules of the game") and the latter is the opened informal side of human life ("free time"). The historically enabled possibility here is to cross over ways/ethics/sides from the former to the latter, from domination to liberation. To transform. And this would seem to be, paradoxically, a full-time job -- a so to speak second coming of humankind's form of existence through the providence of all-dimensioned practice.

As philosophers since the beginning have suspected, there is a higher order than what greets us here. But it is formed, not found. And its call is everywhere.